Torres supports IPI's hiring of Yumul as CEO. PAGE 2

DoD says it is invested in 'green' practices in the CNMI, Guam. PAGE 6

Hafa Adai!

75¢

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COPE NORTH 2021

U.S. Air Force airmen, spouses, and local community leaders watch as aircraft take off during exercise Cope North 2021 at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, on Feb. 8, 2021. Approximately 2,200 personnel and 97 aircraft were brought together for Cope North 21 with the mission to improve combat readiness and increase interoperability among the U.S. Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force, and Japan Air Self-Defense Force, or Koku-Jieitai.

U.S. AIR FORCE/MASTER SGT. RICHARD P. EBENSBERGER

'Travel bubble' still up in the air

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI's plans for a "travel bubble" between the CNMI and South Korea remains uncertain because the Korean Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport has yet to respond to the CNMI's request for one.

Iakopo

In a brief interview with Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Priscilla Iakopo, she said MVA has already sent to the Korean ministry its entire plan for the travel bubble that it drafted with the E-Land Group of Companies and they are just waiting

See TRAVEL on Page 4

'Tourism's resumption depends on controlling COVID'

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

If COVID-19 doesn't go away or remains uncontrolled, people can't travel.

"So until the COVID issue is addressed, we can't expect our tourism [industry] to come back anytime soon," said Gov. Ralph DLG Torres during a radio news briefing last Friday.

Torres

The governor highlighted this point as he emphasized the importance of having the CNMI community vaccinated. Torres said every time a member of the community gets vaccinated against COVID-19, it's helping the CNMI

See TOURISM on Page 4

MVA reopens Japan office

Following a three-month suspension of activities due to the impact of the coronavirus on travel, the Marianas Visitors Authority's representative office in Japan reopened on Feb. 1, 2021, as the destination looks to reboot travel from Japan to the Marianas tenta-

See MVA on Page 4

CHCC: Employers can require COVID-19 vaccination but…

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continuing its vaccination rollout, it clarified that it is up to an employer if they want to make the vaccination mandatory so employees can return to work, but there are some exemptions.

Keanna Villagomez, CHCC's public health educator, said that, while CHCC's main goal is to make the vaccine accessible for everyone, it is up to the businesses on what

See EMPLOYERS on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 7pm, Feb. 10, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,679	4	7,683
Recovered	7,451	9	7,460
Active	89	4	93
Deaths	130	0	130
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			119,791

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	133	0	133
Traced via Travel Screening	107	0	107
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			26,131*
Days since last community transmission			175

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI
Saipan: 12,533
Tinian: 141
Rota: 353

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

INSIDE

BUSINESS
123 Store was a popular name on Saipan in the 1980s. It has reopened as a convenience store.
PAGE 11

NATION
House prosecutors open Donald Trump's historic second impeachment trial in the U.S. Senate.
PAGE 12

LIFE & STYLE
It is now possible to see Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper" without waiting in line.
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Local

Torres supports IPI's hiring of Yumul as CEO

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has expressed support for Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's recent hiring of former Saipan senator Ray N. Yumul as its chief executive officer, saying Friday it is humbling to have a CEO who is from here and understands the culture and the history why the casino industry was approved in the beginning.

Responding to *Saipan Tribune*'s request for comments about Yumul being IPI's new CEO during a radio news briefing, Torres congratulated Yumul on his new job and expressed hope that Yumul will prioritize what is set not just in the law but all other issues that IPI has.

Yumul

"It's definitely challenging and I think we all know that. But [Yumul] taking that helm is something that the industry and the company need…," Torres said.

The governor said the administration is here to support what it can and understands the company's goal in moving forward. At the same time, Torres said, they want to make sure that IPI's arrears and numerous pending issues need to be addressed. He hopes that Yumul will address the community's concerns and those pending issues involving IPI.

"And I hope that the company can come back and is able to assist the community and move forward in their vision here in the CNMI, while making sure that they address the issues that's before them, whether it's federal issues or local issues," Torres said.

Yumul started working as IPI's CEO last month.

When asked at a recent House Committee on Gaming hearing why he is now IPI's CEO, Yumul said he is here to help clean up IPI and get them back on track. He said it's a big challenge, but he is optimistic and that he is going to ask for legislative support.

Yumul's brother, House of Representatives floor leader Rep. Ralph Yumul (R-Saipan), earlier requested to withdraw as a committee member. Committee chair Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) accepted the request.

Donald R. Browne resigned as interim IPI CEO last December. IPI appointed him as CEO effective July 17, 2020.

Kilili: More aid for Marianas in Democrats' relief act

WASHINGTON, D.C.—As the Biden administration's American Rescue Plan takes shape in the U.S. Congress, the Marianas can look forward to receiving significant additional assistance to get through the coronavirus pandemic and the economic disaster it is causing, says Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP).

Numerous committees of the U.S. House of Representatives are marking up their individual sections of the relief legislation this week and Speaker Nancy Pelosi plans to have the House send the completed bill to the Senate by next week. The goal is to have President Joe Biden sign the Rescue Plan into law before the current round of unemployment assistance expires on March 14.

In addition to extension of the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, which for the first time ever is providing help to workers in the Marianas who lost their jobs, the Rescue Plan is expected to have as much as $160 million for the Public School System and enough funding to maintain the Nutrition Assistance Program into 2023.

Biden has also committed to including an $1,400 recovery rebate for taxpayers.

Sablan said he remains hopeful of significant funding for Commonwealth government operations. "If we are successful, I expect the governor to stop the austerity and rehire furloughed workers," Sablan said. "And, I believe, we need to invest in new health care facilities, improvements to the Commonwealth Health Center, and a new clinic for both Rota and Tinian."

Sablan also said he is working with the House Energy and Commerce Committee on additional Medicaid funding for the Marianas and with the House Ways and Means Committee on federal funding for the Earned Income Tax Credit and additional Child Tax Credit monies for families. Sablan first introduced legislation to fund the Earned Income Tax Credit in 2015, a move the Obama/Biden administration supported in 2016. When the House passed legislation to pay for the Marianas EITC, however, the Trump administration threatened a veto, and the Senate took no action. ***(PR)***

Coast Guard medevacs mariner from Wake Island

SANTA RITA, Guam—The U.S. Coast Guard evacuated a 51-year-old crewmember from the 211-foot Japanese-flagged fishing vessel *Shoyo Maru* some 1,501 miles east of Guam on Wake Island last Tuesday.

An Air Station Barbers Point HC-130 Hercules aircrew successfully transported the man from Wake Island to waiting emergency medical personnel in Guam. He was reported to be in stable condition.

"Our 'Always Ready' motto demands that our aircrews are ready to rapidly respond anywhere in the Pacific," said Cmrd. James Morrow, an operations officer at Air Station Barbers Point. "They often perform medical transportation flights between the islands ensuring the most critical patients are able to quickly reach the proper level of care they need."

At 6:30pm Sunday, Joint Rescue Coordination Center Honolulu watchstanders received notification from the Japan Coast Guard that a crewmember aboard the *Shoyo Maru* was experiencing abdominal and back pain.

A Coast Guard duty flight surgeon was consulted and recommended a medevac based on the concern that the mariner's condition could worsen if left untreated. The vessel was instructed to set course for Wake Island where they would meet the Coast Guard aircrew.

A duty corpsman from Joint Rescue Sub-Center Guam was aboard the Hercules monitoring the patient's condition during transport. ***(USCG)***

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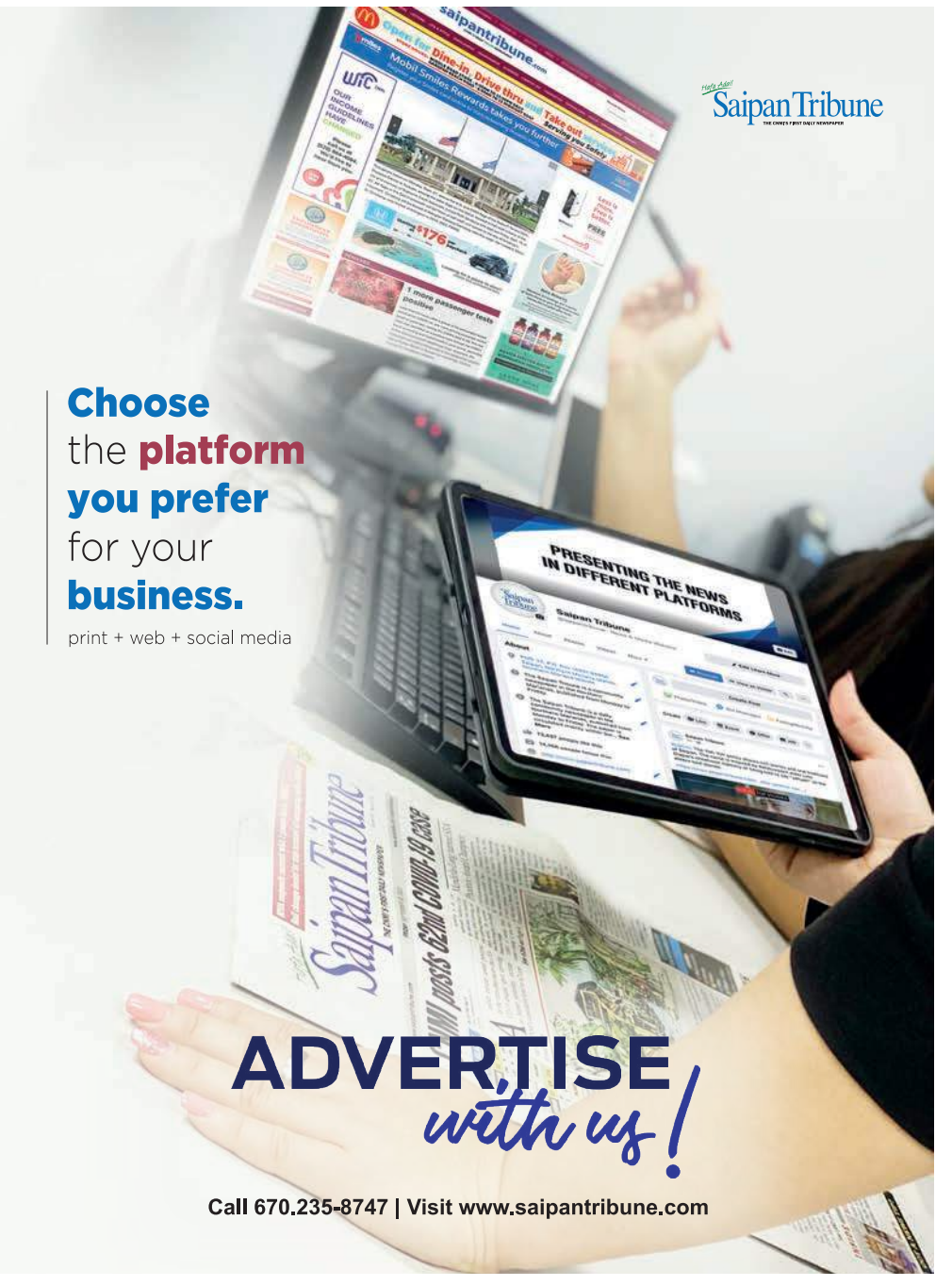

Shortened grace period to pay excise tax is enacted

A bill that reduces the 30-day grace period for importers to pay the excise tax on dutiable goods that require Customs inspection and clearance is now a Commonwealth law.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres notified Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) and House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (R-Saipan) last Friday that he has already signed into law House Bill 21-104. The bill becomes Public Law 21-42.

The previous law allows taxpayers to pay the excise tax within 30 days after the entry of the goods that are subject to an excise tax. However, that became a loophole for several fly-by-night operators to avoid paying this tax. By the time the 30 days are up, the importer could no longer be found. This time, with the new law, taxpayers are required to pay the excise tax upon clearing the Division of Customs.

The House passed the bill with amendments in February 2020. The Senate passed the bill with amendments in April 2020. The House then rejected the Senate's amendments.

Rep. John Paul Sablan (R-Saipan), who is the author of the bill, said in an earlier interview that the Senate amendments included provisions that would only apply to Rota and Tinian, and not Saipan, and that they thought it's unfair.

Sablan said when the conference committee sat down to iron out their differences, they just added Saipan to the bill, so it becomes a generalized Commonwealth-wide approach for all senatorial districts. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Emergency water service interruptions

There will be an emergency water service interruption today, Feb. 11, 2021, from 8:30am to 4:30pm for customers of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. in the areas of Upper and Lower Navy Hill, Upper Miha Housing, and China Town. Customers in the Chalan Galaide and As Falape areas will receive water on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021, at 6am.

This is due to a 6-inch transmission waterline leak on Coastal Drive near the Maui 4 Shaft Well in Sadog Tasi. Water service to the affected areas is anticipated to be restored after the repairs are made but CUC customers in the Chalan Galaide and As Falape area are projected to receive water on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021, to allow ample time for the Calhoun Water Tanks to fill up.

For the safety of the men and women at the jobsite, motorists are advised to proceed with caution and/or take alternate routes as a portion of the roadway will be closed during the repair. ***(PR)***

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61,806 MILES • STK: 20M138A • KBB:$9,900

2018 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT
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8,730 MILES • STK:8HS878 • KBB: $19,449

2018 MAZDA MAZDA6 SPORT
SALE PRICE $16,995
7,365 MILES • STK:18HS965C • KBB: $22,095

2016 KIA RIO
SOLD
SALE PRICE ~~$9,995~~
35,288 MILES • STK: 20M202-A • KBB:8,950

2018 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT
SALE PRICE $14,995
7,910 MILES • STK:8HS875 • KBB: $19,496

2016 MAZDA MAZDA6 SPORT
SALE PRICE $16,995
12,164 MILES • STK:21H013A • KBB: $17,875

2014 MAZDA CX-9
SALE PRICE $12,995
34,682 MILES • STK:4P298 • KBB: $13,199

2016 HYUNDAI VELOSTER
SALE PRICE $14,995
39,217MILES • STK: 20H068-A • KBB: $15,830

2015 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER LE
SALE PRICE $18,995
62,811 MILES • STK:5HS735A • KBB: $19,031

2017 TOYOTA YARIS HATCHBACK
SALE PRICE $10,995
24,305 MILES • STK:18BC53703 • KBB: $11,846

2016 HYUNDAI TUCSON GL
SALE PRICE $15,995
58,260 MILES • STK: 20D063A • KBB: $16,231

2018 HONDA CIVIC EXT
SALE PRICE $21,995
9,993 MILES • STK:18HS935 • KBB: $22,425

2017 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT
SALE PRICE $13,995
34,789 MILES • STK:7R218 • KBB: $15,129

2017 MAZDA CX-3 GT AWD
SALE PRICE $16,995
18,475 MILES • STK: 7P295 • KBB: $18,470

2013 TOYOTA 4RUNNER
SALE PRICE $22,995
70,356 MILES • STK:3P291 • KBB: $23,910

2016 TOYOTA PRIUS C
SALE PRICE $14,995
48,814 MILES • STK:20D134A • KBB: $16,585

2017 MAZDA CX-5 GT 2WD
SALE PRICE $18,995
45,271 MILES • STK: 20D126A • KBB: $19,912

2019 MAZDA CX-5 GT AWD
SALE PRICE $26,995
8,214 MILES • STK:19P299 • KBB: $28,460

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OGM hands out 1.6K food bags on Tinian, Rota

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

Using grant funds from the Office on Insular Affairs, the Office of Grants Management has already distributed 1,600 bags of food on Tinian and Rota and will soon do the same on Saipan as part of efforts to ease people's hardships arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The food distribution program, called "Mass Care through Humanitarian Food Aid Relief," will ultimately benefit approximately 4,000 households in the CNMI, according to the OGM in a Facebook post.

Saipan Tribune learned that 800 bags were distributed on Rota last Jan. 21 and 22 and 800 more were distributed on Tinian last Feb. 9. Residents on Saipan will be able to receive bags of food in the next two to three weeks.

Each food bags include a bag of rice, a case of frozen chicken, and an assortment of canned goods.

In order to know how many food bags the OGM had to distribute on Tinian and Rota, residents of the two islands had to pre-register with an OGM representative. The system of how the same distribution will be done on Saipan is still being worked out.

The Rota Mayor's Office Public Information Office Facebook page stated that their pre-registration for the food drive was held at the mayor's office conference hall last Jan. 20.

According to the Tinian Mayor's Office Facebook page, the food distribution on Tinian was held at the Tinian Youth Center, with many community volunteers assisting with the handing out of food items. The volunteers included staff from the Department of the Interior's OIA, the Office of the Governor, OGM administrator Epi Cabrera, Tinian OGM representative, OGM staff, Rosita King-Aldan, Tinian and Aguiguan's Mayor Edwin Aldan's wife, and her Tinian International Women's Association, Tinian Youth Center staff, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (Seabees), and others.

It was learned that Rota's food distribution was held at the West Harbor Marina, from 3pm to 6pm with the help of Rota's Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Rota's Department of Lands and Natural Resources, Rota's Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, and Rota's Department of Public Safety.

The Office of the Governor, through the OGM and CNMI Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management, was approved a grant award of $281,046 last Nov. 12, 2020, for this purpose.

According to the OGM's post on Facebook, the original target date of distribution was between the first or second week of December as they had wanted to guarantee bulk orders and to plan sufficient logistics for the shipment of the goods to Tinian and Rota.

IPI to close employee housing

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC is looking at shutting down its employee housing just weeks after reinstating power and water.

In IPI's fourth status report in relation to the U.S. Department of Labor's suit, IPI counsel Michael Dotts told U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona that, with many employees now being repatriated, IPI will close its employee housing.

Employee housing now has running water and power; food also continues to be served.

Dotts said IPI has begun repatriation and, as of last Tuesday, 29 IPI employees have left while over 128 remain on island.

"This was less than expected but repatriation is moving forward. When employees are repatriated, IPI must pay for their COVID-19 testing, and pay to provide hotel accommodations in Guam. This expense works out to about $450 per person.

The largest group of IPI workers that need to be repatriated, according to Dotts, are the Mongolian workers, with over 100 still on island. Dotts said they remain here as available flights are still pending.

There are still 11 Turkish IPI workers who remain but are reportedly set to depart on Feb. 15. There are also 11 Taiwanese workers that remain on island but they have already applied for change of status.

A total of six Malaysian workers refused to leave because they demand their paid time off and to be paid their 75% guarantee, while two Italian workers said they will not leave due to a pending lawsuit against IPI.

In addition, IPI also reported about current payroll distribution, stating that a problem arose with the distribution of payroll No. 2.

"When the checks were received from Guam, it was discovered they were dated 2020 instead of 2021. Bank of Guam has agreed to honor the checks despite the typographical error and payroll No. 2 [was] distributed Tuesday," Dotts said.

The next payroll, payroll No. 4, is due on Feb. 12 and Dotts assured the court that this payroll, and future payrolls, will be paid on time.

TOURISM

From Page 1

rebuild the economy.

He said the only way for the people get back to complete 80 work hours, and the only way for people to get employment and opportunities back is to get the tourism industry back.

When asked about an update with Skymark Airlines Inc., Torres said Skymark's operation at this point is still suspended as Japan is going through some rough time with regards to COVID-19.

"So there is no update in terms of any flights coming in at this point," said the governor, adding that they are hoping and pray that Japan and the rest of the world will be able to "flatten their curve," a term that refers to controlling the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The governor said the faster the CNMI gets the community base tested and vaccinated, then the Commonwealth is in the right direction and could bring back the tourism industry naturally.

Torres said he got his second vaccine dosage last week and there were no adverse side effects. He said first lady Diann Torres' first dose was good and that she will get her second shot this Friday.

"Just by taking vaccine, you are not only protecting yourself, you are protecting the people you love," said Torres.

TRAVEL

From Page 1

for a charter approval from the MOLIT and the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency.

"We haven't gotten a response yet. We provided them our whole plan, like safety protocols and such. There's nothing we can do now. It all on Korea now. The ball is in their court," she said.

When asked about the next targeted launch date for the travel bubble, Iakopo said there is no set date yet.

An internal source from E-Land said they are just waiting for a decision from the South Korean government before they start advertising the travel bubble there.

During a monthly MVA meeting last month, Iakopo, who is a member of the MVA Travel Bubble Committee, said the target date to launch the travel bubble was Feb. 5.

The committee is also talking about starting the process to launch the travel bubble in Japan, given how long it is taking to launch the program for South Korea.

However, the travel bubble for Japan may be a little different in terms of safety protocols, given that it will take about six months to launch. One of the proposed ideas for the Japan travel bubble was setting Rota as the destination.

A travel bubble is an exclusive arrangement between two jurisdictions that will allow a relatively easier exchange of travelers between the two.

The travel bubble, which is a collaborative effort between E-Land Group of Companies, MVA, and the CNMI administration, is supposed to be a bridge between Saipan and South Korea and is being touted as a tentative reopening of tourism in the CNMI, allowing Korean tourists to visit the CNMI under an exclusive arrangement.

MVA

From Page 1

tively this summer.

"We are still in the early stages of restarting the Japan market, but we need to start laying the groundwork now for a tentative resumption of travel from Japan this summer," said MVA managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo. "There is a lot of planning needed and, of course, it all depends on conditions related to the coronavirus."

The office's immediate public relations marketing activities will include updating the Japanese language MVA website with COVID-19 related information on the Marianas, creating new listings for social media (Facebook Twitter, Instagram), coordinating coverage with consumer mail magazines, reaching out to media partners, issuing press releases, and conducting a Zoom seminar for consumers. Travel trade marketing activities will include reestablishing relationships with trade partners due to organizational and personnel changes over the last several months, issuing newsletters, posting information on free travel/consumer travel sites, and developing a Marianas-Japan travel bubble based on various condition scenarios related to quarantine in the Marianas, quarantine upon return to Japan, and Japan's Travel Advice and Warning Level.

"We have already initiated communication with our partners in the public and private sectors to gain their insight on the travel situation, and we are also speaking with Skymark Airlines, our lone carrier from Japan," said Iakopo. "Preliminarily, favorable conditions would include for the Japan government to ease for vaccinated travelers the 14-day self-quarantine required when they return to Japan. It would also help if the Japan government's Travel Advice and Warning was reduced from Level 3 (avoid all travel) to Level 2 (avoid non-essential travel). These are just some of the issues needing resolution for the Japan market to restart."

Iakopo added that the MVA will continue to work closely with the Governor's Office, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., the CNMI COVID-19 Task Force, and other stakeholders in reopening the destination for tourism. ***(PR)***

EMPLOYERS

From Page 1

their policies will be. This particular concern, she said, is commonly brought up at Society of Human Resources Management meetings.

"From what I gathered from the discussion, it's really up to the company if they're going to be imposing that kind of policy. …Our main goal is to just make it accessible for all people," said Villagomez.

When asked about those who have disabilities or religious beliefs that would rule out being vaccinated, Villagomez said it is a case-by-case basis.

Citing the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's COVID-19 guidance, she said employers may implement mandatory vaccination polices once a COVID-19 vaccine becomes widely available, but any policy must meet certain requirements under federal anti-discrimination laws. This includes discrimination against employees and job applicants on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or age.

The EEOC rule states that employers may require employees to get the COVID-19 vaccine before reporting to work but employers must consider accommodations for workers who refuse to get vaccinated due to a medical disability or "sincerely held religious belief."

For instance, an employer can implement a mandatory vaccination policy to reduce the threat of workplace exposure to COVID-19 but even where such a direct threat exists, the employer must conduct an individualized assessment to determine whether the threat could be reduced through a reasonable accommodation, such as permitting the employee to continue working remotely or adjusting the employee's duties to reduce the amount of contact with others.

Additionally, if the direct threat cannot be reduced without trouble, the employer can restrict the employee from physically entering the workplace, but the employee may not automatically terminate the employee. Instead, employers will need to determine if any other rights apply under other federal, state, and local authorities. For example, an employee who declines a vaccine due to a disability may potentially be eligible to take leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the FMLA, or other company leave of absence policy.

The same goes for those who have "sincerely held religious beliefs" but the employer should assume that an employee's request for a religious accommodation is based on a sincerely held religious beliefs.

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DoD says it is invested in 'green' practices in the CNMI, Guam

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Department of Defense says it continues to invest in the protection, preservation and conservation of natural resources in Guam and the CNMI.

In this fiscal year alone, Joint Region Marianas estimates more than $26 million will be executed for conservation projects in the region, including approximately $5 million in environmental mitigation associated with military construction. In previous years, from 2016-2020, more than $35 million went to environmental protection and preservation throughout the region.

"Taking a proactive approach to protecting the region's natural and cultural resources remains a priority for DoD," Rear Adm. John Menoni, JRM commander said. "We recognize that the stewardship of the region's cultural and natural resources is a significant responsibility and it is one we take seriously. We maintain open lines of communication with our local government partners and are committed to our alliances across the islands to ensure we are doing everything we can to respect and protect the history, heritage, and environment of this region."

While there are numerous environmental protection programs in the region, the U.S. military has placed an emphasis on a few top priorities, which include military construction, military training, and ungulate management.

Marine life protection a priority in military construction

Military construction projects not only improve existing infrastructure and further enhance defense capabilities in the region, but include initiatives to protect and preserve natural resources to further support the DoD mission.

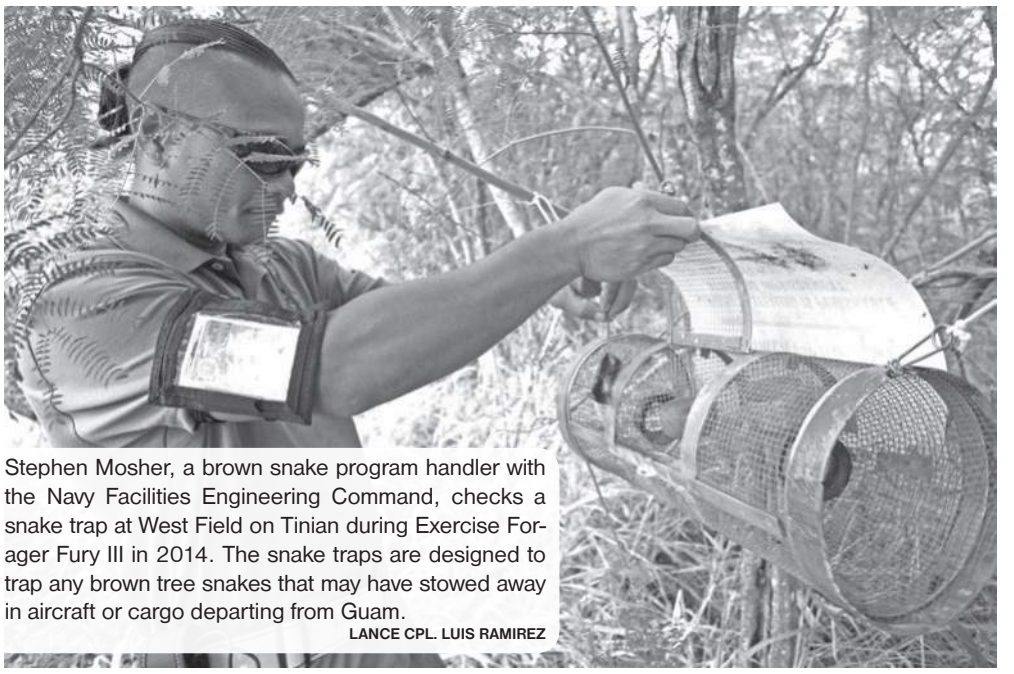
For example, a wharf improvement project was awarded in fiscal year 2021, which requires the relocation of approximately 4,500 coral colonies and the retention of the wharf's historic features in inner Apra Harbor on U.S. Naval Base Guam.

"This is an unprecedented amount of coral with a cost of approximately $4 million to prepare the relocation habitat, delicately move thousands of coral, and monitor and maintain their survival for up to five years," said Andres Reyes, a marine scientist with Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Marianas at NBG.

Future projects include plans to relocate an additional 150,000 coral colonies with an estimated cost of approximately $10.4 million. Approximately $3.9 million is expected to be invested in conservation actions and historic property protection for this project alone.

"A tremendous amount of resources, planning, dedication, and patience is required to successfully complete the translocation of coral," Reyes said. "Prior to considering coral relocation, the Navy is required to consult with multiple federal and local agencies and receive their approvals. Once the consultations and regulatory permitting processes are completed, a team of marine biologists prepares the relocation site. This process can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months depending on the weather and diving conditions."

Reyes said the relocation of coral avoids and minimizes adverse effects to essential fish and marine habitats. "Essential fish habitat includes a variety of other marine resource units such as fish, macro-algae, water quality, and endangered species," he said. "So this approach allows for ecosystem-based management."



Stephen Mosher, a brown snake program handler with the Navy Facilities Engineering Command, checks a snake trap at West Field on Tinian during Exercise Forager Fury III in 2014. The snake traps are designed to trap any brown tree snakes that may have stowed away in aircraft or cargo departing from Guam.
LANCE CPL. LUIS RAMIREZ

Biosecurity emphasized in military training

In order to protect threatened and endangered plants and animals in the region, the Navy continues to maintain an active biosecurity monitoring program. In particular, during military training events, biosecurity is a primary focus and an important component toward minimizing the risk of introducing invasive species to the islands.

According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Mariana Islands Training and Testing Biological Opinion of 2015, the Navy is required to inspect all aircraft, cargo, and equipment departing Guam for off-island destinations. In addition, they are to conduct inspections upon arrival in the CNMI when items arrive from Guam; have invasive species rapid response capability for high-risk species; and adhere to Armed Forces Pest Management Board guidance, which sets cleanliness standards for all cargo and equipment transfers.

During major military exercises in the Mariana Islands all exercise participants, including foreign allies, are required to adhere to all biosecurity policies. The Navy and other DoD service branches provide funding to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Wildlife Services, to conduct brown tree snake inspections of all items.

Assuring cleanliness standards are met, the Navy partners with Colorado State University's Center for Environmental Management on Military Lands to inspect all cargo and equipment moving into and out of the Mariana Islands upon arrival and prior to departure. Approximately $3.2 million is invested annually to support BTS interdiction efforts in the region.

"Biosecurity measures are integrated into every aspect of training to ensure invasive species are not being transported during training events," Stephen Mosher, NAVFAC Marianas natural resources specialist said. "Keeping invasive species out of the transportation network during training events reduces the risk of invasive species getting established and impacting threatened and endangered species."

Ungulate management leads to habitat enhancement

Within the last fiscal year, up to $1.5 million has been invested in ungulate fence projects on each of the military installations in Guam. This serves to protect native habitats from two specific non-native invasive species—feral pigs and deer—which destroy natural vegetation, increase rates of erosion, contribute to the loss of native plant and animal species, and increase the spread of invasive plants.

Each conservation project involving an ungulate fence is composed of four phases: construction of the fence, removal of ungulates, removal of invasive species, and restoration of the area with native plant species. Currently, five fences are built or are under construction, covering approximately 885 acres on the Naval Munitions Site, Haputo Ecological Reserve Area, and

Northern Forest Enhancement Site on NBG. On Andersen Air Force Base, there are two fences constructed and several under design, which will conserve approximately 890 acres of habitat. In the next several years, 20 fence projects are planned to cover an area of more than 2,400 acres. The total investment of these fence projects is estimated to be $43 million.

"Ungulate eradication is a primary step in enhancing native forests," said Aaron Rieffanaugh, NAVFAC Marianas natural resources specialist at AAFB. "On AAFB, Philippine deer and feral pigs impact nearly every aspect of forest regeneration and ecosystem management. They increase erosion and invasive plant intrusion by disturbing soil systems, which when combined with browsing pressures, prevents native plant recruitment causing negative impacts to the forest structure and its diversity. With the addition of the ungulate fences at AAFB and others within JRM, we expect to see dramatic improvements [toward] a much healthier ecosystem here [in] Guam."

"Protection and conservation of our natural resources while sustaining DoD's mission in the Marianas for the security of our nation, our region and our island is paramount and a cornerstone of our environmental programs," John F. Salas, NAVFAC Marianas environmental director at JRM, said. ***(PR)***

Man in 'ice' case gets 10-year imprisonment

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court has sentenced a man who had pleaded guilty to trafficking methamphetamine or "ice" to 10 years imprisonment, with five years suspended.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho sentenced Xiao Ping Wang, 44, to 10 years in prison, which is the maximum sentence for trafficking of methamphetamine.

Camacho ordered that the first five years of Xiao's sentence is to be served day by day, with the remaining five years suspended. The suspended sentence may be imposed for any violation of law or rules of the Office of Adult Probation.

Xiao was given credit for the one year, 11 months, and 18 days that he has already served in jail. He will be eligible for parole after serving one third of the unsuspended sentence.

After serving his sentence, Xiao will be placed on 10 years probation whether or not he is granted parole.

Xiao was ordered to report to the Office of Adult Probation after completing his five-year sentence. In addition, Xiao must pay the statutory court cost of $25 and a probation fee of $120 per year.

No fine was imposed on Xiao because the court found him indigent.

Xiao was not eligible for the Drug Court program because he is a citizen of the Republic of China and is not a U.S Citizen.

Xiao is allegedly involved in a group of individuals who distribute drugs under the alias "brother."

According to court information, Wang was arrested following two sting operations in 2018, on Dec. 12 and on Dec. 17.

Xiao was initially tried for unlawfully manufacturing, delivering, or possessing the controlled substance.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Free Soroptimist CNMI 'Fun'raiser

The Soroptimist of the Northern Mariana Islands Chapter is hosting their second annual Fat Tuesday/Mardi Gras Party on Saturday, Feb. 13, starting at 6pm, at Godfather's Beach Bar inside the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan. There will be specialty drinks and prizes for the best costumes. Proceeds will benefit the club's annual "Live Your Dream" award. Join us for this free fun event!

Also, the club will hold its monthly luncheon meeting today, Feb. 11 at 12pm, at the Majesty Restaurant on Beach Road. The Chapter is open for new members, and if you have a heart for the women of the CNMI, join us! ***(PR)***

Free webinar today on changes to PPP, EIDL

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the CNMI Small Business Development Center, is hosting a free webinar, "Understanding the Changes to the US Congress New Relief Package," today, Feb. 11, at 10am via Zoom.

The event includes a presentation from Ken Lujan, branch manager of the U.S. Small Business Administration's Guam Office, regarding changes to SBA's Paycheck Protection Program and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan. Additionally, there will be information shared from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce about the changes to the Employee Retention Tax Credit Program.

This event is free and open to the first 100 registrants at tinyurl.com/SCCFeb11Webinar. A link to the webinar will be emailed after registration. ***(PR)***

NMHC to talk about CDBG-DR Housing Programs on Tinian

The Northern Marianas Housing Corp. is sending its CDBG-DR Loans Team to Tinian today, Feb. 11, 2021, to conduct a presentation and Q&A session on the CDBG-DR Housing Programs. The event is scheduled for 1pm at the Natibu Park Antonio M. Borja Amphitheater in order to comply with COVID-19 protocols on social distancing.

The three NMHC CDBG-DR Housing Programs include: New Construction for Homeownership Opportunity and First-Time Homebuyer Assistance Program; Homebuyer Program; and Homeowner Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program.

Prequalification applications may be picked up and completed at the Tinian Field Office or accessed via the NMHC CDBG-DR website at: www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com

For more information, contact NMHC CDBG-DR Division at 233-9447/9448/9449/9450 or via email cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmhc-gov.net. ***(PR)***

$1.03M seeks to abate COVID-19 among FAS citizens in Hawaii

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs is announcing the award of $1,033,100 in CARES Act grant funding to help Pacific Islander communities in Hawaii that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The funds will be administered by *We are Oceania*, a nonprofit organization with culture and language expertise and liaises between Hawaii state agencies and families from the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau.

» We are Oceania to provide support to families most disproportionately impacted

"The COVID-19 pandemic has been especially challenging for certain Pacific Islander communities in Hawai'i and these funds will provide much needed support," said OIA director and acting assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs Nikolao Pula. "We are pleased to be able to leverage the expertise and experience of *We are Oceania* to combat and fight the COVID-19 pandemic that has disproportionately affected Pacific Islanders."

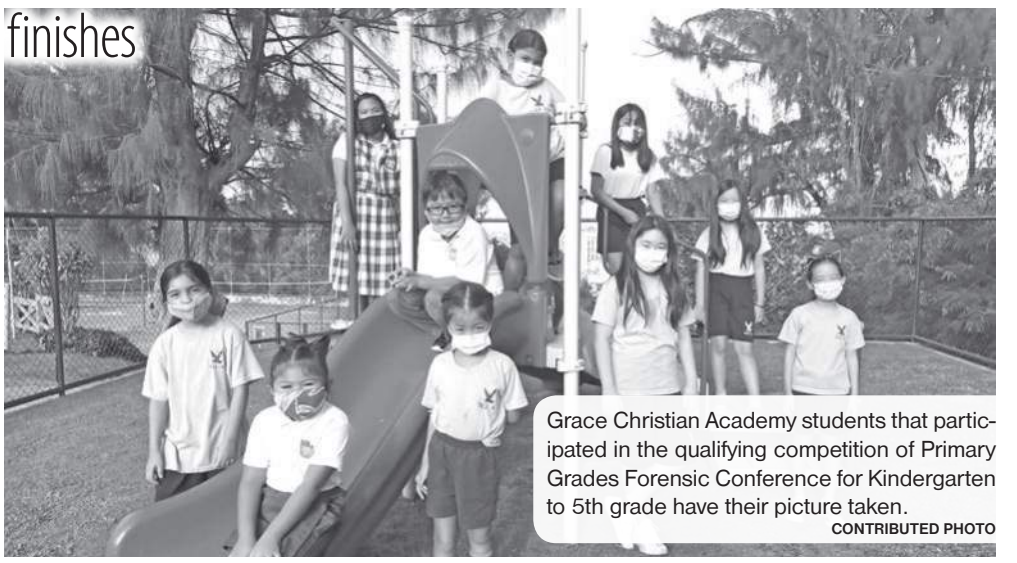
The *Honolulu Civil Beat* reported last November that Pacific Islanders in Hawaii are more than twice as likely to die from or be hospitalized by the coronavirus than other racial and ethnic groups, after adjusting for age and gender, according to data from the Hawaii State Health Department. The report indicated that Chuukese, Marshallese, and Samoans are among the most impacted.

The funding will be used to support *We Are Oceania's* ongoing COVID-19 response in Hawaii to migrants and families from the freely associated states who now live in Hawaii and are disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Funds will help train and provide specialists fluent in target Pacific Islander languages to answer and respond to queries about the pandemic, manage food drive efforts, deliver PPE, and provide cleaning supplies.

Pula

Prior to the onset of COVID-19, language and cultural barriers were observed to be the cause of most gaps in services for Micronesian populations in Hawaii. These barriers were amplified during COVID-19, as families with limited-English were unable to appropriately self-isolate or access testing and other services, contributing to the disproportionate number of Micronesian populations among the Pacific Islanders most impacted by COVID-19. Since the pandemic struck early last year, *We are Oceania* has also experienced an increase in the number of calls and emails from other service providers on Hawai'i seeking cultural and language expertise in order to work effectively with Micronesian populations. ***(PR)***

GCA's PGFC competitors bag 8 first-place finishes


Grace Christian Academy students that participated in the qualifying competition of Primary Grades Forensic Conference for Kindergarten to 5th grade have their picture taken.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Grace Christian Academy students won top awards at the 3rd virtual monthly qualifying competition of Primary Grades Forensic Conference for Kindergarten to 5th grade. They bagged eight first place awards in different events for the two divisions.

In K-2 division, Kindergarten 5 student Jacqueline Iris Quitugua won first place in Declamation. A first-time competitor, Quitugua said, "I like being on camera reciting my piece. I like competing with other kids."

First grader Fiona Yu was so happy when she won first place in her two events: Dramatic Interpretation and Readers Forum. She said, "PGFC is lots of fun and I will keep trying to become more confident. Thanks to Ms. Esther for helping me memorize my piece and read very well."

In the 3-5 division, four third-graders won first place in one of their events. En Mei Huang won first place in Impromptu speaking. "It was unexpected because the topic was hard for me in the beginning, but later it became easier, with more practice in school and at home," she said.

Anne Gabriel Arriola, who has been competing since she was in Kindergarten, won first place in Readers Forum. She said, "I like joining this competition because it helps me to improve my speaking and reading skills."

Catalina Frink, another third-grader who just started to join the competition last year, won first place in Declamation. She said, "Joining PGFC is very fun! I like to do it, especially practicing with my mom!" Her mother said she learned to pronounce more words correctly by performing her competition pieces.

Another third-grader, Chloe Hayul Shin, is really shining this year and winning more awards. When she won first place in Humorous Interpretation, she said, "I was nervous, but I was also happy and excited. I felt like I was going to a very big contest."

Fifth grader Llyana Jairah Libut, who won first place in Readers Forum, said, "I like PGFC because it helps me improve my speaking skills. It makes me push myself harder. I would like to thank my family for helping me."

Due to the COVID-19 situation, almost all of the events were prerecorded video entries. The only live event for PGFC is Impromptu Speaking via Zoom, in which only the competitors and judges can enter the live meeting.

PGFC competition encourages public and private school students from kindergarten 5 to fifth grade to participate in and become proficient in the performing arts: reading, public speaking, and interpretation.

LIST OF ALL WINNERS

K-2 DIVISION

Declamation
Jacqueline Iris Quitugua, 1st Place

Dramatic Interpretation B
Fiona Yu, 1st Place

Reader's Forum Masters A
Fiona Yu, 1st Place

3-5 DIVISION

Declamation
Catalina Marie Frink, 1st Place

Dramatic Interpretation
En Mei Huang, 2nd Place
Nerissa Corinne Xiao Liu, 5th Place

Humorous Interpretation
Chloe Hayul Shin, 1st Place

Impromptu Speaking A
En Mei Huang, 1st Place

Reader's Forum A
Nerissa Corinne Xiao Liu, 2nd Place

Reader's Forum B
Anne Gabriel Arriola, 1st Place

Reader's Forum C
Llyanna Jairah Libut, 1st Place

Reader's Forum D
Akira Ito, 3rd Place

Chamorro Reading
Remelene Geoliz Falig, 3rd Place

PGFC coach/coordinator: Esther Manzano. ***(PR)***

Name: Jocelyn Ferrer
Address: P.O. Box 505235
Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: 588-1728/233-1517

Pro Se

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In Re the Matter of the Petition for the Appointment of General Guardianship for: F.K.C.F Minor Child By: Jocelyn Armas Ferrer Petitioner

FCD-GU CIVIL ACTION NO. 20-0423 FCD

NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on March 26, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom Superior Court, before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 9th day of February, 2021.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court

/s/
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Chunyanyin Rivera Petitioner, vs. Victor Norita Rivera Respondent,

FCD-DI-CIVIL ACTION NO. 21-0028 FCD

SUMMONS OR PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the Court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 506492 Saipan, MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this Summons, Judgement by Default may be taken against you for relief in the Complaint.

Dated this 20th day of January, 2021.

/s/ Clerk of Court

VINCENT J. SEMAN, CNMI Bar No. F-0361
Seman Law Offices, LLC
JET Realty Bldg., Suite 204
P.O. Box 10001 PMB 168, Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 323-2115
E-mail: vjseman@semanlaw.com
Attorney for: Petitioner Maria Frica T. Pangelinan

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF DELGADINA PANGELINAN ZABETAKIS, Deceased

PROBATE CASE NO. 21-0043-CV

NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION TO PROBATE and NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Date: Thursday, March 4, 2021
Time: 10:00 am
Judge: Joseph N. Camacho

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE DELGADINA PANGELINAN ZABETAKIS OR OF HER ESTATE.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Petitioner, Maria Frica T. Pangelinan, has petitioned the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to issue Letters of Administration for the Estate of **DELGADINA PANGELINAN ZABETAKIS**, "Decedent". The attorney for Petitioner is Vincent J. Seman, Esq., whose address is JET Building, Suite 204, Chalan Pale Arnold, Gualo Rai, PO Box 10001 PMB 168, Saipan, MP 96950.

The hearing on the Petition to probate the Estate of Decedent by Petitioner is scheduled to be heard on Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 10:00am, at before Judge, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing. Any and all persons, creditors or entities having claims against the Decedent or her estate are hereby required by law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within Sixty (60) days of the first publication, or the claim(s) will be barred. A copy of your claim should also be sent to VINCENT J. SEMAN, Esq. at his address herein-above indicated.

Dated this 9 February 2021. By: /s/ CLERK OF COURT

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PACIFIC ISLANDS CLUB SAIPAN

Chief Accountant: Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration (may be foreign equivalent). Acts as primary support to the Finance Director in the financial administration of the Company's policies and procedures. Responsible for maintaining in full integrity of the company's financial statements including but not limited to Balance Sheets, Profit and Loss Statements and Cash Flow Statements. 60-months experience as Accountant or Chief Accountant.

Send resume to: Interpacific Resort Saipan Corp., dba Pacific Island Club Saipan, Attn: Human Resources, P.O. Box 502370, Saipan, MP 96950.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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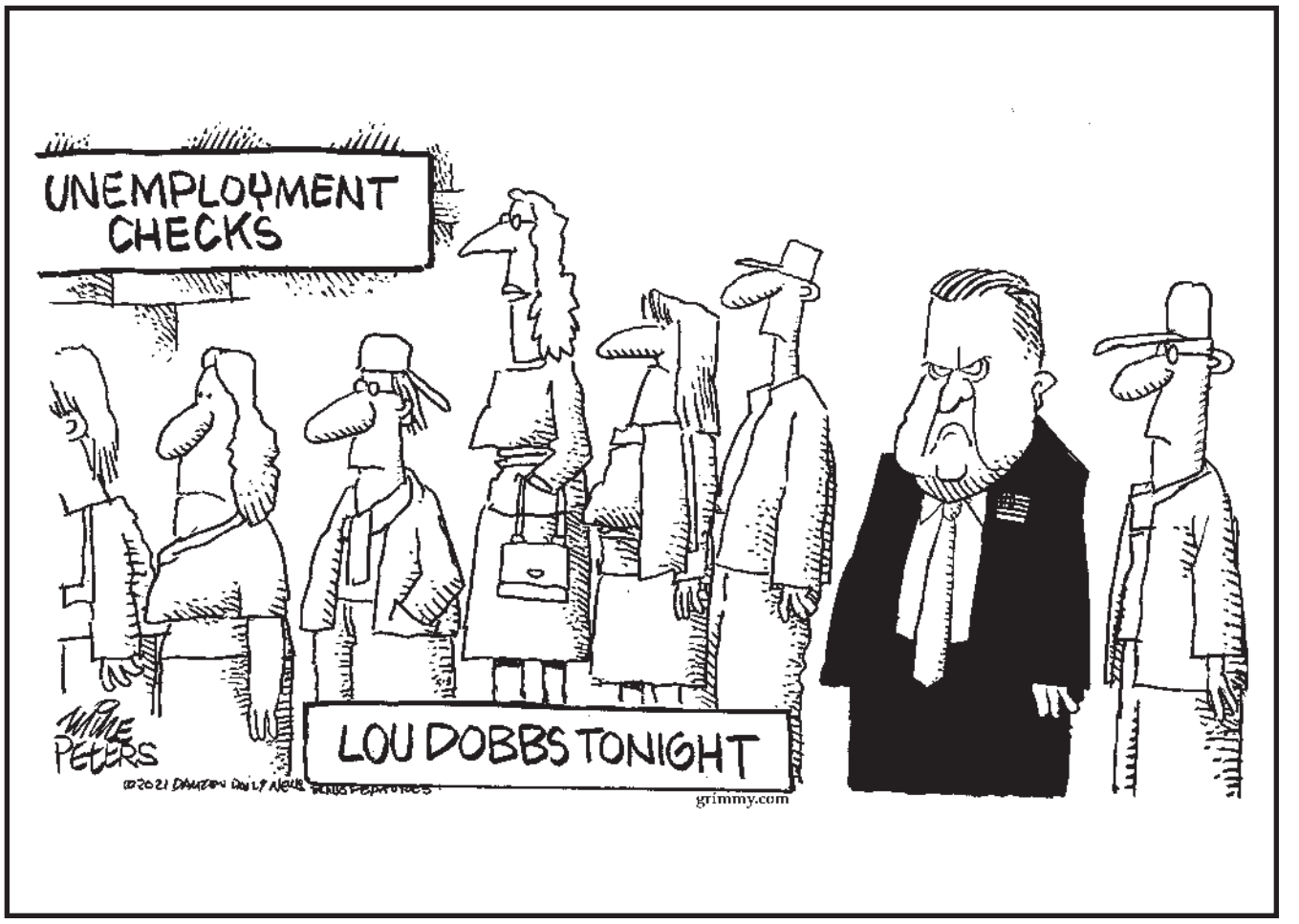

EDITORIAL

Immigration reform shouldn't ignore enforcement

President Joe Biden's early efforts on immigration have focused on quickly mending the damage done by his predecessor. Quite right. President Donald Trump was especially active on immigration, so there's plenty to undo. But Biden is also looking farther ahead, and he's proposed a comprehensive immigration reform that's meant to resolve the issue for the foreseeable future.

The challenge in long-term immigration reform is to strike a difficult balance—one that resolves the status of the millions of people living in the country illegally, builds a system to promote the additional immigration the country needs, and ensures that future illegal immigration is kept under control. Biden's proposal rightly provides an eight-year pathway to citizenship for most of the 11 million people thought to be living in the U.S. without legal status, but it lacks an effective plan to strengthen immigration enforcement alongside. Critics who deride the plan as "amnesty first, enforcement never" have a point. As it stands, the proposal risks aggravating the problem of illegal immigration. Its prospects of becoming law look minimal.

Biden and his team need to start over. Since the last big immigration reform, the two parties have moved farther apart on the issue. Nonetheless, a plan that combined amnesty with better enforcement is capable of commanding bipartisan support.

The best way to strengthen immigration-law enforcement is to require employers to vouch for the legal status of their hires—something that many employers already do voluntarily. The federal government maintains an E-Verify service that lets them check job applicants' legal status. If the checks fail, the system allows for appeals and redress. In most cases, knowing that the information will be verified is enough to encourage compliance. Some employers—such as federal contractors—are required to use the system. Most aren't. A lot of Democrats are open to the idea of obligatory E-Verify as part of comprehensive immigration reform.

Biden should also pledge to speed the completion of an entry-exit tracking system that Congress mandated all of 25 years ago. In recent years, visa "overstays" have greatly outnumbered unauthorized border crossers—one more reason why Trump's wall made little sense. No nation can ensure its border security unless it can reliably track the coming and going of foreign visitors.

Adding these proposals to the Biden plan would refute the charge of "enforcement never." And they'd stand a good chance of bringing moderate Republicans to support comprehensive reform.

Many other issues would still need to be resolved. These include the extent to which needed skills, on the one hand, and family connections, on the other, should be criteria in immigrant applications. What role should temporary work visas play? What about refugees and asylum seekers? How can a notoriously slow and inefficient system be streamlined and modernized? None of that is easy—but a smaller, well-balanced, politically feasible bill would be a good start. Biden should take another look at his plan.

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COVID-19 vaccine distribution has a fairness problem

By FAYE FLAM
Bloomberg Opinion

Faye Flam is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist and host of the podcast* Follow the Science. *She has written for* The Economist, The New York Times, *the* Washington Post, Psychology Today, Science *and other publications*.

Figuring out how to combine science with fairness in COVID-19 vaccine distribution is a tricky puzzle. Science can help predict how to distribute limited doses to minimize overall deaths, but that means acting fast, which might compromise fairness. That's how we end up with outrage when hospital administrators get shots ahead of nursing home residents, or, as The Atlantic reports, offspring ahead of their elderly parents.

Perfection is impossible. But there's a way to do justice to both science and ethics: Focus vaccines on geographic hot spots and the elderly. Experts say both are important—and getting the vaccines to the hard-hit areas could correct racial disparities that are already appearing in the early rollout.

Focusing on geographic hot spots can help minimize spread of the disease, which will also minimize the risk of new vaccine-evading variants cropping up. The more people get infected, the greater the number of viral particles out there, and the greater number of mutant versions will arise. And that means the greater the odds a dangerous variant will spread.

Yale epidemiologist Robert Hecht has been studying COVID-19 in Massachusetts and found the virus is vastly more prevalent in some areas than others. "We're not just talking about a marginal difference of 5 or 10%," he says. "We are talking about 200, 300% differences."

He likens vaccinating these hot spots to firefighters starting where flames are burning hottest. And the hot spots are hot for a reason, he says—it's where people have in-person jobs, can't afford not to work, and live in multigenerational housing sometimes taking in extra tenants to make ends meet.

The hot spots are also places recent immigrants come to live, and many don't have any connection to the health care system. They may be reluctant to seek testing or medical help because of their immigration status, he says.

Dousing the flames in these hot spots will prevent them spreading elsewhere. "You can get multiple benefits out of this," he says. It's the right thing to do from an epidemic control standpoint, he says. And it could bring some relief to communities that have not had good access to health care through the pandemic.

Sending vaccines to hot spots is also the fair thing to do, since many people in places with high rates of disease live in crowded housing and do high-risk jobs, often not by choice. Many are members of minority groups who have been disproportionately hurt by the virus and its economic fallout. Demographic data collected by the CDC suggests that too few vaccines have gotten to high-risk people who are Black, American Indian, Alaska Native or Hispanic.

Dorit Reiss, a professor at the University of California's Hastings College of the Law, says it's important to separate problems with vaccine allocation plans from what happens in reality. The CDC and the National Academy of Sciences have created thoughtful plans that give the most vulnerable people priority, she says, but inadequate funding has made it hard to carry out those plans. And some states are creating plans on their own.

With poor funding for distributing vaccines, she says, it's been cheaper to send doses to big hospitals, even though that's led to hospital administrative staff getting the shots before many people who are more at risk.

What she says would make the most sense ethically would be to get vaccine doses to regions where people have been underserved throughout the pandemic. "I am really concerned we are seeing racial imbalance in vaccine distribution," she says, adding that the way to improve fairness to minorities is to bring the vaccines to them.

Reiss says it's also important to avoid judging people who have behavior-related health problems. While social media has fueled some outrage against people with smoking-related illnesses getting the vaccine early, she says such judgment is ethically dubious.

We don't deny people care for skin cancer because they went out in the sun, she says. "The fact that someone got addicted to cigarettes and did not manage to quit … does not seem a reason to let them die from COVID," she says. Beyond that, smoking addiction is more common in socioeconomic groups that are more likely to be at risk from the virus.

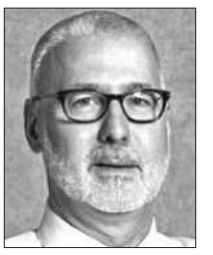
And it's a waste of energy getting outraged at "selfish" people getting vaccinated "out of turn." As some infectious disease experts are arguing, the vaccines likely do have some effect on reducing transmission, so getting one is not all selfish—it's part of a civic duty and could help protect others and end the pandemic.

Above all, we shouldn't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Getting too rigid with allocation standards could mean throwing away doses—and that's the worst of all possible worlds.

In praise of the non-virtual

By KEITH C. BURRIS
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Keith C. Burris is editor, vice president and editorial director of Block Newspapers. Email: kburris@post-gazette.com.



Like most folks these COVID days, I am grateful for technology, and for the virtual.

Through the miracles that the virtual world provides, I am able to connect with friends, my kids, my siblings.

Our children have taught us how to play games online—second nature to them; never before on our radar.

I can watch a concert—classical, jazz, rock or pop—virtually. Some are presented in a highly artistic way. A few have moved me.

I can go to church online. We like that we can go to the kitchen and get a cup of coffee or tea any time during the service.

At our house, as in many homes, we have been sampling, and oversampling, the endless choices offered by Amazon and Netflix.

Our oldest son caught the dreaded virus, and overcame it, but was able to check in with his doc by Teladoc.

The presidential inauguration, typically watched at home by the vast majority of Americans, seemed more special this year, somehow. The fact that almost no one could attend in person, even if they could get to Washington, made it more intimate. It was an inauguration, via film, rather than an inauguration that was filmed. The folks who were physically present were extras. The Tom Hanks celebration show, from the Lincoln Memorial—a celebration of and for the country—was as important as the swearing-in ceremony on the Capitol steps. And the president was a part of the country's celebration and sacred ritual, not the point of it.

Just as a civil wedding with only four or six people as witnesses can be more deeply affecting than a big shindig, this inauguration, in its simplicity and directness, soothed many a shaken American heart.

We are coming through this COVID thing, as a polity and as a society.

And all the large and small virtual miracles are helping us to do it.

But one thing I hope will not happen: I hope we will not get too accustomed to the virtual. I hope we will not come to prefer it.

Church is very convenient at home on a screen. No need to shower or get dressed up. But the solemnity is broken by the availability of that coffee pot and tea kettle.

Most people don't stand or kneel at home.

And no power or support is derived from the souls beside and behind you, because there is no corporate body of prayer.

Or take politics. Something central to politics is lost if there is no door-to-door campaigning, handshaking or oration. A speech is a different kind of thing than a TV debate. Old time pols used to say they had to "make" a speech, not "give" one.

I was at Barack Obama's first inauguration—1.8 million freezing people, very few able to get to their seats, no room to move, and nothing but goodwill. Most of us, even with tickets, watched on the jumbo screen at a very great distance. A man in front of me, in one of the endless lines, said: "Well, the point here is to tell your grandchildren I was there. You don't go into the details."

Politics is a human art, a personal art, conducted by, with and toward other human beings.

After Robert Kennedy was killed in 1968, I remember that some said: Let us conduct our politics on TV now. It's the only safe way.

Thank God, we didn't do that. It would no longer be politics.

Politics is a human art.

The same is true of music and of medicine.

There is a corner of ancient rock 'n' roll where one of the mantras is: "Live music is better. Bumper stickers will be issued."

I would buy that bumper sticker, because most bumper sticker slogans are only partially true.

This one is entirely true.

Whether you are listening to the music of Bach, or the voice of Van Morrison, or Willie Nelson, there is no stereo system that can deliver the thrill of music being heard as it is made.

And what is medicine beyond the mending? It is listening. Medicine is the human art. Sure, your doc can listen to you on Zoom. But, let's be honest, do you listen in the same way to a person on a screen that you do to a person across a table, or next to you by the fire, or even beside you in a car? Technology almost demands that you attempt to multitask. Distraction is the default position. A child, a patient, a customer or a constituent, in person, demands your attention.

I asked my doctor, who is a great doctor, "How do you like telemedicine?" "I don't," he said, "I don't like it at all."

Another doc, a specialist, told me, "I finally decided, if I die I die. I wouldn't like that. But this (hands on and in person) is the only way I know to practice medicine."

One of my sisters, a teacher for 30 years, said the same thing about teaching. She's quitting. She can't teach to a box.

The great Norman Mailer missed out on Ma Google and Wikipedia but lived long enough to experience the internet. He said it was nice, convenient. But he missed working in a library, actually doing research. You dig an entire afternoon for one nugget, he said.

Even writing is a human art.

And, yes, Netflix is a godsend. But it is not like going to the movies. When the lights come down and the first flickers rise with the sound on the big screen, it beats the hell out of your TV, no matter how large and plasmatic.

That experience is topped only by the first few notes of the Beethoven Ninth Symphony in a hushed concert hall. You will never, ever get that on your iPhone.

The virtual is what is possible these days, and, often, what is miraculous. And we should be grateful.

But something is also lost. When COVID is over, we shouldn't settle. The non-virtual, the actual, is the greatest miracle of all.

Sweet and sour senescent sonnets

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey Connolly aka Pepe Batbon is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

"The unfortunate winter of old age is stiff through pain and shaky life comes to an end like *a water bubble."*

—In Latin on a 16th century drawing of the four ages of man.

The Unfortunate Winter of Old Age

The unfortunate winter of old age brings stiff
fingers, knees, and shoulder joint pain from arthritis
one fortunate benefit of growing old is old
friends, children and grandchildren who delight us.

We stumble through the immensities of shaky life
between birth and death, many a slip of their tongues
cause hurt, harm, and anger between husband and wife
climbing up and down heaven and hell's ladder rungs.

Old age pains and problems are part of senescence
and the same is true for lifelong joy and trouble
from deep despair to joy reveling in pleasance
all puffed up with pain and pride we pop life's bubble.

Senior winters bring more verbal slips and pratfalls
as we tell tall tales throwing old verbal curveballs.

Geriatric Rag Half in the Bag

Had a few drinks, think I can still walk a straight line
from my home down side streets for a mile or two
to buy groceries and a box or two of wine
no breakage with a wine box it's something new.

Later I scowl above my fat chin jowl
drinking juice from a box that frustrated the fox
my fuzzy mind recalls fair-weather friends and foul
some old buddy boys from the school of hard knocks.

Hoarding books I've crammed every nook and cranny full
drawers and cupboards of antique junk to be treasured
now my head and beard hair are as white as sheep's wool
cups of beer, wine, and booze are no longer measured.

Me and my old hag both half in the bag go to bed
with music and romancing dancing in our head.

Young people, Biden and climate change

By VIRGINIA HE
PROGRESSIVE MEDIA PROJECT

For me, it is still a vivid memory – sitting on my living room couch in the summer of 2018, taking in the news coverage of the California wildfires that ravaged the West Coast.

I watched as the bright orange conflagration scorched everything in its path. I watched as firefighters desperately tried to tame the fire. And I watched as terrified people ran from their crumbling houses, covering their faces to avoid inhaling the smoke.

It's a scene that I'll never forget—a living image of how climate change is a real and present danger, and how we can't keep denying it anymore.

The fact is, young people have been waiting for decades for bold climate legislation that puts our future first.

We've been waiting ever since 1990, when the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded in its First Assessment Report that temperatures rose from 0.3 degrees Celsius to 0.6 C over the last century.

We've been waiting since 2005, when Hurricane Katrina killed more than 1,800 people, caused $81 billion in damage and rang up $160 billion in costs. We've been waiting ever since as wildfires have ravaged California and floods have submerged cities in water. We've been waiting for what seems like an eternity, yet with minimal progress.

That's why on Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2021, I nearly cried tears of joy as President Joe Biden signed a multitude of executive actions to take on climate change. For the first time, it felt like my voice was being heard. For the first time, it felt like we had won something tangible, something we could count as a win and build on.

These actions encompass three main things. The first is the need to actively combat climate change and avert the major catastrophes that could arise if no action is taken.

The second is to address the impact on labor and the economy. One of the biggest concerns people have with transitioning away from fossil fuel is the loss of jobs. The executive actions counter this by creating a Civilian Climate Corps that will produce jobs but also help build a sustainable economy.

The third is addressing environmental justice. Climate change intersects with many other issues, including racial and social justice. Biden addresses this by committing to "make environmental justice a part of the mission of every agency," finally placing it at the center of governmental climate measures.

We must acknowledge that marginalized communities are on the front lines of this crisis; we cannot address climate change without addressing all of the other intertwined issues.

For the longest time, I had doubted whether the United States would deliver any meaningful action on climate change. Now I feel as though Biden has, at long last, pushed the nation in that direction.

But even the aggressive action President Biden is taking does not address all aspects of the climate crisis, including the need to ban fracking, shut down pipelines and declare a national "climate emergency." We cannot take on climate change as a whole until we address the crisis in all its aspects.

The thought of what lies ahead—the turmoil, the tensions, the politics—can feel daunting. Yet I hold on to the hope that, in the face of this daunting task, our nation can move forward without looking back. Because for me, as a young climate activist, the thought of a future filled with more climate disasters and economic chaos is unbearable.

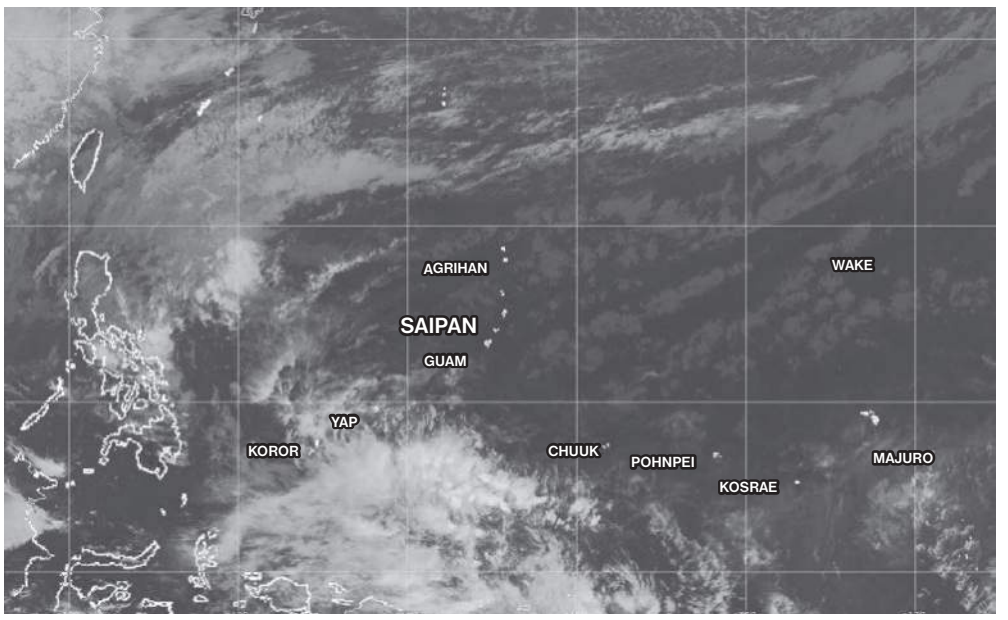
Virginia He is a youth climate activist based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, who works with the Sunrise Movement and other environmental organizations. This column was produced for the Progressive Media Project, which is run by The Progressive *magazine, and distributed by Tribune News Service.*

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.
86° 76°	86° 76°	87° 77°	87° 77°	86° 76°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:13 AM, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Moderate to fresh trade winds and mostly cloudy skies for the Marianas this morning. Had a few showers overnight, 0.04 for Guam, 0.12 for Saipan.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	84° / 76°
Palau	Thunderstorm	83° / 77°
Yap	Thunderstorm	83° / 78°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	86° / 78°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	86° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorm	84° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:43 AM	6:19 PM
Friday	6:42 AM	6:19 PM
Saturday	6:42 AM	6:20 PM
Sunday	6:42 AM	6:20 PM
Monday	6:41 AM	6:20 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	6:14 AM	5:51 PM	-
Friday	7:01 AM	6:46 PM	-
Saturday	7:44 AM	7:39 PM	-
Sunday	8:24 AM	8:29 PM	-
Monday	9:01 AM	9:17 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	72° / 61°
Beijing	Snow Shower	34° / 25°
Hong Kong	Windy	72° / 66°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	75° / 68°
London	Cloudy	61° / 48°
Los Angeles	Showers	64° / 53°
Manila	Mostly Sunny	90° / 73°
Melbourne	Sunny	75° / 52°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	79° / 68°
New York	Sunny	51° / 31°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	43° / 32°
Paris	Showers	54° / 48°
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	50° / 41°
Rome	Partly Cloudy	57° / 46°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	74° / 47°
San Francisco	Sunny	48° / 25°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	41° / 30°
Tokyo	Windy	48° / 32°
Washington, DC	Sunny	60° / 37°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
1:30 AM	Low Tide	-0.56
8:34 AM	High Tide	1.74
2:04 PM	Low Tide	0.97
6:55 PM	High Tide	1.77

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 6
UA117	7:00am	7:40am	4

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 6
UA174	5:15am	5:56am	4

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:55pm	5:56am+1	3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	5
UA184	10:55pm	4:40am+1	1, 3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

123 Store: Rebuilding a family business

If the name sounds familiar, it should because 123 Store was a popular name that started business on Saipan in the 1980s. It was known for a variety of businesses in Garapan—a convenience store, a gift shop, and at one point a duty free shop. But the downturn of the economy in the 2009-2010 led to the chain's closure.

Now, a young blood in the family, Sean Lee, has restarted the good reputation the 123 Store brand has built and enjoyed years ago by opening a convenience store along Chalan Kanoa Drive near the U.S. Postal Service.

"After over 10 years, I opened it again at the end of November in 2019 and focused on just a convenience store because that is what the locals need. I got a break when my boss, the owner of White Laundry, offered me an opportunity to open a small store inside the laundromat. The location is ideal, too, because people can buy items here before, during, or after laundry," he said.

"Reopening was a little tough because when we first started everything was normal then in March 2020 [the COVID-19] pandemic hit. We had to go through an adjustment period because we had to change operating days and hours and also a lot of people are struggling financially… That was difficult for everyone because it was either they were getting laid off or furloughed from work. I myself was working at another company but I stepped down so I can fully focus on my store," he added.

123 Store is located inside Winner's Laundry in Chalan Kanoa near the U.S. Post Office. BEA CABRERA

BEA CABRERA
Customers can find all the items they need at 123 Store.

BEA CABRERA
Young entrepreneur Sean Lee went to retail business with the hope that he will be successful in continuing what his father started in the 1980s

123 Store offers the usual items you see in a convenience store, but Lee goes the extra mile to give service to his customers. "We offer a variety of goods, mainly pretty much everything especially what the customers in the laundromat needs like soap, fabric softener, etc. We also have food items if they get hungry like soba and we have a microwave for different microwavable food available in the store," Lee said

"Having a microwave in the store is a big advantage and ready for customers that need them.. We also have hot water…We also listen to what the customers suggest that we carry in the store. We don't have a whole lot of frozen food but we have what people ask for like fish, sausages, etc. also local vegetables and fruits depending on the season," Lee added

Lee said the store may be smaller than other groceries but customers are assured that they have everything they need at 123 Store. "We balance what kind of items we sell in the store. We continuously study our market and from there we consider what things do we have to give up and what items are we going to focus on… we're trying to put more items…having a captured market—the laundromat—is a big opportunity for us and a laundromat having a convenience store inside is a necessity, so it works both ways," he said.

Lee added that future plans include being able to accept food stamps. "We are in the process of getting our food stamp accreditation so we can help the community. It hurts to turn down customers who are unable to use the stamps in the store… we are hoping to get it by next month. Overall, I want customers to feel 'wow this kind of place exists!' and I think we are successful in that. A lot of people come inside and say it's clean, neat, and it may be compact but most of the things are there."

123 Store Chalan Kanoa is open from Monday to Sunday, 6am-9pm. For more information, call (670) 235-1231 or visit them on Facebook and Instagram: "123 Store."

Dems attempt to push through school funding, wage increase

WASHINGTON (AP)—House Democrats on Tuesday muscled past Republicans on portions of President Joe Biden's pandemic plan, including a proposed $130 billion in additional relief to help the nation's schools reopen and a gradual increase of the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour.

Democrats on the Education and Labor Committee say schools won't be able to reopen safely until they get an infusion of federal funding to repair building ventilation systems, buy protective equipment and take other steps recommended by federal health officials. The plan faces opposition from Republicans who want to tie new school funding to reopening.

The panel met Tuesday to craft its portion of a $1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package that tracks with Biden's plan for battling the pandemic and reviving a still staggering economy. Democrats hope to rush the bill to Biden for his signature by mid-March, using a special budget-related process allowing certain legislation to be approved by a simple majority.

Rep. Bobby Scott, chair of the Education and Labor Committee, dismissed complaints from Republicans who objected to use of the process.

"We must address the urgent needs of the people now," said Scott, D-Va., "The multiple crises affecting our communities will grow worse every day if we do not act. We must recognize that we cannot afford to prioritize process over the urgent needs of people across this country."

House Republicans attempted dozens of changes to the legislation at a hearing that stretched late into the evening. They proposed amendments to limit funding only to schools offering in-person instruction, or to steer aid to families if their schools continued operating online. On the wage increase, they sought to exempt small businesses or certain rural areas. It appeared all of the amendments would be defeated.

Biden has made reopening most of the nation's K-8 schools within his first 100 days in office a key goal. The issue has become increasingly heated as some school districts face gridlock with teachers who have refused to support reopening until their demands are met. Biden's plan for $130 billion in school funding is in addition to more than $8 billion from previous relief packages.

In a tweak to Biden's plan, the Democratic proposal would require schools to reserve at least 20% of the funding for efforts to address learning loss, including afterschool programs and summer classes. The bill also matches Biden's proposed $40 billion for colleges and universities but, unlike the White House plan, makes private colleges eligible for relief.

Hack exposes vulnerability of cash-strapped US water plants

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—A hacker's botched attempt to poison the water supply of a small Florida city is raising alarms about just how vulnerable the nation's water systems may be to attacks by more sophisticated intruders. Treatment plants are typically cash-strapped, and lack the cybersecurity depth of the power grid and nuclear plants.

A local sheriff's startling announcement Monday that the water supply of Oldsmar, population 15,000, was briefly in jeopardy last week exhibited uncharacteristic transparency. Suspicious incidents are rarely reported, and usually chalked up to mechanical or procedural errors, experts say. No federal reporting requirement exists, and state and local rules vary widely.

"In the industry, we were all expecting this to happen. We have known for a long time that municipal water utilities are extremely underfunded and under-resourced, and that makes them a soft target for cyber attacks," said Lesley Carhart, principal incident responder at Dragos Security, which specializes in industrial control systems.

"I deal with a lot of municipal water utilities for small, medium and large-sized cities. And in a lot of cases, all of them have a very small IT staff. Some of them have no dedicated security staff at all," she said.

The nation's 151,000 public water systems lack the financial fortification of the corporate owners of nuclear power plants and electrical utilities. They are a heterogenous patchwork, less uniform in technology and security measures than in other rich countries.

As the computer networks of vital infrastructure become easier to reach via the internet — and with remote access multiplying dizzily during the COVID-19 pandemic — security measures often get sacrificed.

"It's a hard problem, but one that we need to start addressing," said Joe Slowik, senior security researcher at DomainTools. He said the hack illustrates "a systemic weakness in this sector."

Cybersecurity experts said the attack at the plant 15 miles northwest of Tampa seemed ham-handed, it was so blatant: Whoever breached Oldsmar's plant on Friday using a remote access program shared by plant workers briefly increased the amount of lye — sodium hydroxide — by a factor of 100, according to Pinellas County Sheriff Bob Gualtieri. Lye is used to lower acidity, but in high concentrations it is highly caustic and can burn. It's found in drain cleaning products.

The intruder's timing and visibility seemed almost comical to cybersecurity experts. A supervisor monitoring a plant console about 1:30 p.m. saw a cursor move across the screen and change settings, Gualtieri said, and was able to immediately reverse it. The intruder was in and out in five minutes.

The public was never in peril, though the intruder took "the sodium hydroxide up to dangerous levels," the sheriff said. Also, plant safeguards would have detected the chemical alteration in the 24-36 hours it would have taken to affect the water supply, he said.

Nation

Trump trial gets go-ahead after emotional, graphic first day

AP

In this image from video, House impeachment manager Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., speaks during the second impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump in the Senate at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021.

WASHINGTON (AP)—House prosecutors on Tuesday wrenched senators and the nation back to the deadly attack on Congress as they opened Donald Trump's historic second impeachment trial with graphic video of the insurrection and Trump's own calls for a rally crowd to march to the iconic building and "fight like hell" against his reelection defeat.

The detailed and emotional presentation by Democrats was followed by meandering and occasionally confrontational arguments from the Trump defense team, which insisted that his remarks were protected by the First Amendment and asserted that he cannot be convicted as a former president. Even Trump's backers in the Senate winced, several saying his lawyers were not helpful to his case.

The senators sitting as jurors, many of whom fled for safety themselves the day of the attack, watched and listened, unable to avoid the jarring video of Trump supporters battling past police to storm the halls, Trump flags waving. While many minds are made up, the senators will face their own moment to decide whether to convict or acquit Trump of the sole charge "incitement of insurrection."

The heavy emotional weight of the trial punctuates Trump's enduring legacy as the first president to face impeachment trial after leaving office and the first to be twice impeached. The Jan. 6 Capitol siege stunned the world as hundreds of rioters ransacked the building to try to stop the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's victory, a domestic attack on the nation's seat of government unlike any in its history. Five people died.

"That's a high crime and misdemeanor," Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., declared in opening remarks. "If that's not an impeachable offense, then there's no such thing."

Trump's lawyers insist he is not guilty, his fiery words just figures of speech.

In a key early test, senators rejected an effort by Trump's allies to halt the trial, instead affirming the Senate's authority under the Constitution to decide the case. They voted 56-44 to confirm their jurisdiction, ruling that impeaching a president after he leaves office is constitutionally permissible. Six Republicans joined the Democrats.

Security remained extremely tight at the Capitol on Tuesday, a changed place after the attack, fenced off with razor wire and with armed National Guard troops on patrol. The nine House managers walked across the shuttered building to prosecute the case before the Senate.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Biden would not be watching the trial of his predecessor.

"Joe Biden is the president, he's not a pundit, he's not going to opine on back and forth arguments," she said.

With senators gathered as the court of impeachment, sworn to deliver impartial justice, the trial started with the Democratic House managers' gripping recollections, as they described police officers maimed in the chaos and rioters parading in the very chamber where the trial was being held.

Trump's team countered that the Constitution doesn't allow impeachment at this late date. Though the trial now proceeds, that's a legal issue that could resonate with Republicans eager to acquit Trump without being seen as condoning his behavior.

Trump fumes, GOP senators baffled by legal team's debut

WASHINGTON (AP)—Former President Donald Trump fumed that his attorneys' performance on the opening day of his second impeachment trial was a disaster, as allies and Republican senators questioned the strategy and some called for yet another shakeup to his legal team.

Trump, who was watching the proceedings in Washington from his Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Florida, was furious at what he saw, according to a person familiar with his thinking. Senators, too, criticized what they described as an unfocused and rambling performance as Trump's team and Democratic House managers began to lay out their cases in front of the Senate jury.

While it remains unlikely that more than a handful of Republicans will join Democrats in convicting the former president at the end of the trial, the proceedings were a chance for Trump to try to repair some of the damage to his legacy incurred over the storming of the Capitol by a mob of his supporters. Trump has been charged with inciting the Jan. 6 insurrection, and last month he became the first president in history to be impeached by the House twice.

But Trump's team — which was announced little more than a week ago — appeared unprepared as they attempted a good cop, bad cop routine that veered from flattery to legalese, and stood in dramatic contrast to Democrats' focused emotional appeals.

Trump — ever the showman — was impressed with the Democrats, who opened Tuesday's session with powerful video that compiled scenes of the deadly attack on Congress. And he complained that his team — especially lead lawyer Bruce Castor — came off badly on television and looked weak in comparison, according to the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

The anger was echoed by Trump allies, who blasted the lawyers both publicly and privately and with repeated profanities.

"There is no argument. I have no idea what he's doing. I have no idea why he's saying what he's saying," said Alan Dershowitz, an attorney who represented Trump in his first impeachment trial, as he weighed in on Castor during an appearance on Newsmax as the session was underway.

Peter Navarro, a former Trump trade adviser, had already been urging the former president to ditch his legal team and hire Republican Rep. Matt Gaetz before the trial began, warning: "You gotta get rid of those guys. These people don't understand. This is a political trial."

Republican members of the Senate appeared equally baffled, especially at Castor, who spent much of his time buttering up senators with compliments, praising the case made by Democrats and going on tangents.

GOP Sen. John Cornyn of Texas said Castor "just rambled on and on and on and didn't really address the constitutional argument. He said Trump attorney David Schoen, who spoke second, "got around to it" and "did an effective job. But I've seen a lot of lawyers and a lot of arguments and that was not one of the finest I've seen."

Before the criticism mounted, another Trump adviser described Castor's presentation as part of a "very clear, deliberative strategy." The adviser said that after the Democrats' emotionally charged opening, Castor had set about "lowering the temperature" before "dropping the hammer on the unconstitutional nature of this impeachment witch hunt."

The hammer did not appear to hit its nail.

Republican Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, who voted with Democrats on Tuesday to move forward with the trial, said Trump's team did a "terrible job" and was "disorganized," "random" and "did everything they could but to talk about the question at hand."

GOP Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, who also voted with Democrats, said she was "perplexed" by Castor, "who did not seem to make any arguments at all, which was an unusual approach to take."

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, one of Trump's staunchest allies, said he didn't think the lawyers had done "the most effective job," while South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, another close ally to Trump, said he didn't know where Castor was going with his arguments.

1 dead, 4 injured in shooting at Minnesota health clinic

BUFFALO, Minn. (AP)—A 67-year-old man unhappy with the health care he'd received opened fire at a clinic Tuesday, killing one person and wounding four others, and bomb technicians were investigating a suspicious device left there and others at a motel where he was staying, authorities said.

All five victims were rushed to the hospital, and a hospital spokeswoman confirmed the one death Tuesday night. Three remained in stable but critical condition and a fourth had been discharged.

The attack happened Tuesday morning at an Allina clinic in Buffalo, a community of about 15,000 people roughly 40 miles (64 kilometers) northwest of Minneapolis. Authorities said Gregory Paul Ulrich, of Buffalo, opened fire at the facility and was arrested before noon.

Though police said it was too early to tell if Ulrich had targeted a specific doctor, court records show he at one point had been ordered to have no contact with a man whose name matches that of a doctor at the clinic.

As authorities searched the clinic for more victims, they found the suspicious device and evacuated the building, Wright County Sheriff Sean Deringer said.

It was not immediately clear whether that device exploded, but TV footage showed several shattered plate-glass windows at the clinic. Deringer said suspicious devices were also found at a local Super 8 motel where Ulrich had been staying, and there were at least two shattered windows there as well.

Hennepin County Medical Center spokeswoman Christine Hill said Tuesday night that a person brought to the hospital after being shot at the Buffalo clinic had died. Hill said she could not release any other details.

Police Chief Pat Budke became emotional and had to pause during a news conference as he told reporters "our heart breaks as a community." While an exact motive wasn't immediately known, Budke said Ulrich has had a long history of conflict with health care clinics in the area.

"All I can say is, it's a history that spans several years and there's certainly a history of him being unhappy with health care ... with the health care that he'd received," Budke said.

Asia

UN experts: N. Korea using cyberattacks to update nukes

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—North Korea has modernized its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles by flaunting United Nations sanctions, using cyberattacks to help finance its programs and continuing to seek material and technology overseas for its arsenal including in Iran, U.N. experts said.

The panel of experts monitoring sanctions on the Northeast Asian nation said in a report sent to Security Council members Monday that North Korea's "total theft of virtual assets from 2019 to November 2020 is valued at approximately $316.4 million," according to one unidentified country.

The panel said its investigations found that North Korean-linked cyber actors continued to conduct operations in 2020 against financial institutions and virtual currency exchange houses to generate money to support its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs.

The experts previously reported on the continuous involvement in Iran of the Korea Mining Development Trading Corporation, North Korea's primary arms dealer and main exporter of goods and equipment related to ballistic missiles and conventional weapons that are under U.N. sanctions.

In the new report, the experts quoted an unidentified country as saying North Korea and Iran

In this photo provided by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attends at a meeting of Central Committee of Worker's Party of Korea in Pyongyang, North Korean, Monday, Feb. 8, 2021. AP

"have resumed cooperation on long-range missile development projects ... said to have included the transfer of critical parts, with the most recent shipment associated with this relationship taking place in 2020."

Iran replied on Dec. 21 that "preliminary review of the information provided to us by the panel indicates that false information and fabricated data may have been used in investigations and analyses of the panel," the experts said.

In North Korea's weapons development, the experts said, Kim Jong Un's government has also produced fissile material—an essential ingredient for producing nuclear weapons—and maintained its nuclear facilities.

"It displayed new short-range, medium-range, submarine-launched and intercontinental ballistic missile systems at military parades," they said. "It announced preparation for testing and production of new ballistic missile warheads and, development of tactical nuclear weapons ... and upgraded its ballistic missile infrastructure."

The panel recommended that the Security Council impose sanctions on four North Korean men: Choe Song Chol, Im Song Sun, Pak Hwa Song, and Hwang Kil Su.

The Security Council has imposed increasingly tough sanctions on North Korea since its first test explosion of a nuclear device in 2006. It has banned most of the country's exports and severely limited its imports, trying to pressure Pyongyang into abandoning its nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Prosecutors in Thailand file charges against protest leaders

BANGKOK (AP)—Prosecutors in Thailand on Tuesday charged four prominent pro-democracy activists with sedition and defaming the monarchy for their protest activities.

The case is the first of numerous ones lodged against participants in the student-led protest movement that is being prosecuted by the attorney general's office. It also is the first in which the defendants are expected to spend significant time in jail, as suspects in other cases have usually been released after arrest.

The four—Parit "Penguin" Chiwarak, Arnon Nampa, Somyos Prueksakasemsuk and Patiwat Saraiyaem, also known as "Mor Lam Bank"—were denied bail.

The protest movement campaigned last year for Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha and his government to step down, the constitution to be amended to make it more democratic and the monarchy to be reformed to make it more accountable.

The demand about the monarchy is the most radical and controversial, because the institution has been widely considered an untouchable, bedrock element of Thai nationalism. It has been considered taboo to publicly criticize the monarch, and insulting or defaming key royals is punishable by up to 15 years in prison per incident under a lese majeste law known as Article 112.

The activists focused late last year on the monarchy issue with speeches and activities that drew an increasing tough response from Prayuth's government. After earlier pursuing other charges, it began bringing complaints of lese majeste against them. The charge had not been used for about three years at the request of King Maha Vajiarlongkorn.

The legal aid group Thai Lawyers for Human Rights says at least 55 people have faced lese majeste charges since last November.

Prayuth Petchkhun, a spokesman for the attorney general's office, said that in addition to lese majeste, the four have been accused of sedition and violating the Act on Ancient Monuments, in connection with a rally held in a public field near the Grand Palace.

On Monday, U.N. human rights experts issued a statement expressing concern over Thailand's increasingly severe use of the lese majeste law to curtail criticism of the monarchy. The statement followed the case of a Thai woman who was sentenced to 34 1/2 years in prison for material she reposted on social media.

"We have repeatedly emphasized that lese majeste laws have no place in a democratic country," the U.N. experts said. "Their increasingly harsh application has had the effect of chilling freedom of expression and further restricting civic space and the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms in Thailand."

World

Divide on Syria again blocks UN Security Council action

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The top U.N. envoy for Syria on Tuesday urged the rival international players in Syria to bridge the divides that have blocked any moves toward peace, but the chasm remained too deep for the Security Council to take any action.

Geir Pedersen reiterated his disappointment to the U.N.'s most powerful body that after five rounds of preliminary discussions aimed at revising the war-torn country's constitution--a key step toward U.N.-supervised elections--ended without progress Jan. 29.

But the Security Council could not agree on a press statement that would have expressed regret "that 17 months after the launch of the Syrian-owned and Syrian-led Constitutional Committee, the drafting of a constitutional reform ... had not begun."

A revised statement dropped the expression of regret and made no mention of the Constitutional Committee, which diplomats said was at the request of Russia, a key ally of Syria's government. But after objections from some Western nations at eliminating that key point, the attempt by the British council presidency to issue a press statement was dropped, the diplomats said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the discussions were private.

After the council meeting, its three European Union members—Estonia, France and Ireland along with previous members Germany and Belgium--issued a statement expressing regret at "no substantial progress" on a constitution and "regret that the Syrian regime continues to obstruct the process, refusing to engage constructively on the proposals of the special envoy and of the Syrian opposition."

The failed effort to produce a Security Council statement, which dragged on for more than six hours, reflects the extreme difficulty of making any movement toward ending the Syrian conflict, now in its 11th year.

Pedersen's frustration was evident when he talked to reporters from Geneva after virtually briefing the council, calling the Constitutional Committee meeting was "a missed opportunity." He hinted at the time that the Syrian government delegation was to blame for the lack of progress.

Pedersen said he told council members that he needs "a credible engagement to ensure that if the committee reconvenes, it will function properly, work expeditiously, and achieve some results and continued progress."

More importantly, he said, "my key point was the need for a constructive international diplomacy on Syria." He said he is "more convinced than ever that without this," there will be no progress on a constitution or any other issue that needs to be resolved on the road to peace.

"The current divides in the international community need to be bridged, in an effort to define mutual and reciprocal steps, ... defined with realism and precision, that can create some trust and confidence and generate movement on the issues," Pedersen said.

There appears to be agreement on one issue.

Both draft press statements Tuesday referred to the need to adhere to a council resolution adopted in December 2015 that unanimously endorsed a road map to peace in Syria. It was approved in Geneva on June 30, 2012, by representatives of the United Nations, Arab League, European Union, Turkey and all five permanent Security Council members—the U.S., Russia, China, France and Britain.

Turkey unveils space program including 2023 moon mission

ANKARA, Turkey (AP)—Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan unveiled an ambitious 10-year space program for his country Tuesday that includes missions to the moon, sending Turkish astronauts into space and developing internationally viable satellite systems.

Erdogan announced the program, seen as part of his vision for placing Turkey in expanded regional and global role, during a live televised event laced with special effects.

He said Turkey planned to establish "a first contact with the moon" in 2023, when the country marks the centennial of the founding of the Turkish republic. The first stage of the mission would be "through international cooperation," while the second stage would utilize Turkish rockets, Erdogan said.

"Our primary and most important goal for our national space program is the contact of the Republic, in its 100th year, with the moon," the Turkish leader said. "God willing, we are going to the moon."

Erdogan also declared Turkey's aim to send Turkish citizens into space with international cooperation, to work with other countries on building a spaceport and to create a "global brand" in satellite technology.

"I hope that this roadmap, which will carry Turkey to the top league in the global space race, will come to life successfully," he said.

Turkey established the Turkish Space Agency, or TUA, in 2018, with the aim of joining the handful of other countries with space programs.

Critics have questioned the government's decision to spend vast sums of money on that goal at a time when the country's economy is suffering. But supporters say a space program will provide jobs for researchers and is likely to reduce the brain drain of emigrating scientists.

Erdogan did not provide details on how Turkey plans to achieve its goals. Last month, he and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk spoke by telephone and discussed cooperation on space technologies with Turkish companies.

Meanwhile, a metal monolith that mysteriously appeared and disappeared on a field in southeast Turkey turned out to be a publicity gimmick before the event.

The3-meter-high (about 10-feet-high) metal slab with the inscription "Look at the sky, you will see the moon" written in an ancient Turkic script was found Friday by a farmer in Sanliurfa province. The monolith was near the UNESCO World Heritage site of Gobekli Tepe, which is home to megalithic structures dating to the 10th century B.C., thousands of years before Stonehenge.

The structure was reported gone Tuesday morning, adding to the mystery.

Environment

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A walk for water

Would you walk a mile to raise awareness on clean water? How about 15 miles?

This is exactly what couple pastor Mat and Victoria Murphy did just this January, where, to raise awareness on the global need for clean water, made a video showing them walk a 15-mile stretch of Saipan for six hours, from Pakpak Beach in San Antonio to Banzai Cliff in Marpi, carrying 5 gallons of water.

Saipan Tribune had the privilege to sit down with them, and learn more about their advocacy.

"Our idea to carry the water jug across the island was pretty simple: we knew it would be a difficult task in the heat of the day, which would remind us and others… that while we are enjoying our beautiful paradise island, there are others struggling."

"… Sometimes the struggle is as close to home as another beach on island that is often littered with beach debris."

These clean water advocates are from Indiana, and have been on island since the fall of 2019. Pastor Mat teaches Bible and Physical Education at Saipan Community School, while Victoria teaches literature at the Northern Marianas College. They have a YouTube channel, PastorMattieIce, where the video of their "walk" is posted.

The two also have "Water," a running dog who stays in Indiana with their friends and family. Naming the dog "Water" was intended as a joke, in reference to everyone wanting clean running water at home. However, soon after, the pastor realized that clean water is not a joking matter, which brought their passion to helping others have clean water.

For the couple, clean water is essential for sustainability.

"Clean drinking water helps sustain physical health. Clean ocean water helps sustain environmental health. Thousands of humans die every day from water-borne diseases. Thousands of sea animals die annually from plastic-related injuries," stressed pastor Mat.

"The internet is filled with stories and statistics of humans pointlessly dying from bacteria in their water and sea creatures pointlessly dying from plastic in theirs. We can do our part by working to provide clean water for people to drink and animals to live."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Pastor Mat and Victoria Murphy pose in one of Saipan's pristine beaches.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Pastor Mat and Victoria with their dog, Water, back in Indiana.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The clean water advocates have lived on Saipan since the fall of 2019.

'Together, we can change the world'

As far as what they have observed concerning the need for clean water programs, according to pastor Mat, there is a lack of awareness and an even larger lack of applicability.

"Our tagline for our movement, Running Water Events, is to make a difference with what you have, where you are. Many times, people think either it is someone else's problem or that the problem is too large for us to fix. However, a little each day goes a long way."

They work on helping raise money for national organizations to dig wells in available communities in developing countries around the world.

"In many of these regions, clean water access is miles away, if it is available at all… A well in India, that would service an entire community for years, costs only $1,500. That may seem like a large amount of money, but if a group of people from an office, church, or school joined together, they could drastically improve the standard of life for an entire village for many years into the future."

»Couple walks 15-mile stretch of Saipan to advocate for clean water

In the CNMI, for an easier access to clean drinking water everywhere on island, the couple would want to see more hydration filtration stations in markets where residents can easily fill up reusable bottles and containers, instead of always purchasing disposable water bottles, which normally eventually end up as trash.

"Some markets on island already have a place for residents to come fill up their water jugs for a reasonable cost. Having this available in more markets would help more people across the island. Or at least, there are water bottles on island that are safer to the environment."

He also noted how some villages and living complexes have placed purification units to provide clean drinking water into people's homes.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS
Screenshots of pastor Mat and Victoria Murphy's 15-mile walk from one end of Saipan to the other.

Aside from highlighting the need for projects on island that could increase access to clean drinking water, the couple also advocates the 'reduce reuse recycle" of single-use items, and even the simple practice of picking up five pieces of trash on the beach, to help keep the ocean waters, and waterways, clean.

The pastor also noted Joeten's Plastic-Free Tuesdays, as well as Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance's environmental education campaigns and partnerships with schools.

"Individually, we cannot change the world's water crisis. But together, together we can change the world," he added.

Make a difference

The couple also reaches out to legislators and government officials, in appreciation of, as well as to call for more projects that could benefit all on island.

Pastor Mat believes that Saipan has done a great job with continual improvement, providing trash cans with lids at the beaches, and recycling containers on several strategic spots around the island that help keep the community, including the water ways, clean.

"Legislators and governmental officials of the CNMI can continue to take actions toward providing clean water ways and getting purified water into villages to reduce hazardous single use water containers entering the waterways and the homes of our sea animals."

"On a different note, the CNMI could investigate using the clean ocean to provide more sustainable and cost-efficient energy through hydroelectricity. But, it would probably make more sense to continue increasing the use of solar energy, which is much more efficient and available than hydro-electricity."

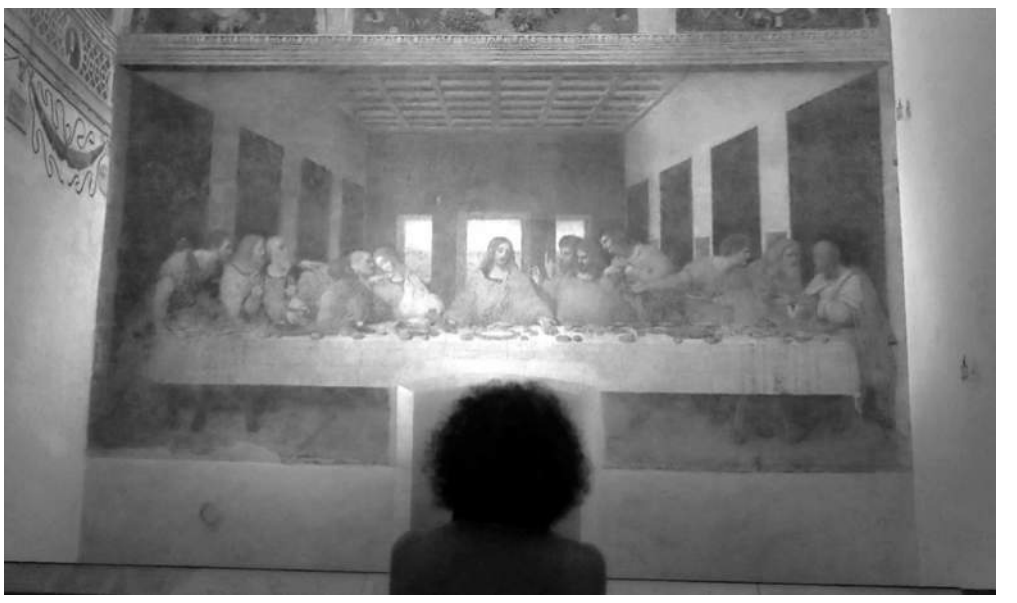
For the community, the couple offers their biggest encouragement.

"Make a difference how you can in all areas of your life. If you can give people clean water to drink, do it. If you can pick up at the beach, do it. If you can give a listening ear to a troubled friend in need, do it," shared Victoria.

"We all can make a difference with what we have," pastor Mat added. "We can make a difference on our island by taking the initiative to use reusable bags and water bottles. We can make a difference worldwide by financially contributing to a water well project in areas such as India and the Philippines, where clean water is either many miles away or not accessible at all."

Life & Style

Leonardo's 'Last Supper' reopens to public with short wait



AP

A woman admires Leonardo da Vinci's painting "Last Supper," dating to 1494-1498 and housed inside the refectory of the Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, in Milan, Italy, Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021.

MILAN (AP)—COVID-19 restrictions have brought a novelty to art lovers: The possibility of seeing Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper" without waiting in line, and with same-day tickets possible.

Access to the masterpiece housed inside the refectory of the Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie resumed Tuesday after the second closure of the pandemic, starting in November and the fall virus resurgence. The famed mural was also closed to the public from Feb. 26-June 9, with the double closures resulting in an 80% drop in visitors last year from 2019's record 445,728 Leonardo admirers.

This year remains uncertain, due both to virus variants and the slower-than-anticipated rollout of vaccinations. Museum officials are anticipating a drop of 60% in visitors, with an accompanying decrease in revenues.

Access is restricted in the first week to just eight viewers every 15 minutes, going up to 12 starting next week. While in the past demand also among foreign visitors meant that reservations were necessary weeks or even months in advance, Emma Daffra, director of Lombardy's state museums, said reservations are now opening each week with same-day tickets possible at the museum.

"The dramatic COVID emergency had the effect of lowering the legendary wait time, and for the public this is a real opportunity," Daffra said. "For years we have said that we need to make museums a point of reference for the locals and now this has become an unavoidable goal."

For the moment, residents of Lombardy are the main beneficiaries. Italy's virus restrictions currently ban travel between regions, except for work, health or other necessities.

"I feel it's an experience of new beginnings," said Roberto Ponti, who finally got to see the "Last Supper" after months of delay.

"Italy is full of art, full of beauty, and to be able to get close to that beauty means reclaiming life as a whole," he said. "It means taking a step toward a life that may be different socially, but that can go on."

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Michelle Obama to team up with puppets for a kids' food show

NEW YORK (AP)—Michelle Obama is launching a Netflix children's food show with a pair of puppets "to bring a bit of light and laughter to homes around the world." The new show, called "Waffles + Mochi," launches March 16 and will be "all about good food: discovering it, cooking it, and of course, eating it," the former first lady posted on Instagram on Tuesday. The 20-minute episodes will combine live action and puppets, and Obama will be a series regular. The show centers on two best puppet friends who dream of becoming chefs and travel across the world looking for ingredients and making dishes "alongside renowned chefs, home cooks, kids and celebrities," according to a press release from the show. "Kids will love it, but I know that adults will also get plenty of laughs—and some tips for the kitchen," Obama wrote. "In many ways, this show is an extension of my work to support children's health as first lady—and to be quite honest, I wish a program like this had been around when my girls were young."

Stevie Wonder awarded Israel's prestigious Wolf Prize

JERUSALEM (AP)—Music legend Stevie Wonder on Tuesday was awarded Israel's Wolf Prize, headlining a group of laureates in the arts and sciences receiving the prestigious recognition. Wonder was recognized for "his tremendous contribution to music and society enriching the lives of entire generations of music lovers," according to a statement from President Reuven Rivlin's office. The Wolf Foundation is a state-owned entity that issues the award to promote excellence in science and the arts. About three dozen Wolf Laureates have gone on to win Nobel prizes. Wonder, who has received more than two dozen Grammy Awards, has produced a string of hits over a long career that began when he was a youngster who performed as Little Stevie Wonder. His classic hits include "You Are the Sunshine of My Life," "Superstition," "I Just Called to Say I Love You" and "Living for the City." Wonder will share the music award with Austrian composer Olga Neuwirth.

Woman suing Trump asks court: Toss his legal-shield claim

NEW YORK (AP)—A former contestant on "The Apprentice" is trying to get her defamation lawsuit against former President Donald Trump moving again now that he is out of office. Summer Zervos—who is suing Trump for calling her a liar after she accused him of sexual assaulting her in 2007—asked New York state's highest court last week to dismiss an appeal from Trump that had put the case on hold. The appeal had argued that a sitting president can't be sued in a state court. Now that he's out of office, "the issues presented have become moot," Zervos lawyers Beth Wilkinson and Moira Penza wrote in a filing Wednesday, saying Trump's lawyers aren't going to fight the request. A request for comment was sent to the ex-president's attorneys.

'Wizard of Oz' remake planned with 'Watchmen' director

NEW YORK (AP)—New Line Cinema is making a new adaptation of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," L. Frank Baum children's novel, with Nicole Kassell, the visual architect of "Watchmen," set to direct. Baum's 1900 novel, now in the public domain, has spawned many adaptations over the years—most famously, of course, the 1939 MGM musical by Victor Fleming and starring Judy Garland. Kassell's version will not be a musical. New Line said it will be a "fresh take" and a "reimagining" of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz." It will have some advantages, too, since Warner Bros. owns New Line and the 1939 film. That means it can use some trademarked elements like the ruby slippers. "While the 1939 musical is part of my DNA, I am exhilarated and humbled by the responsibility of re-imagining such a legendary tale," said Kassell in a statement. "The opportunity to examine the original themes—the quest for courage, love, wisdom and home—feels more timely and urgent than ever. These are profoundly iconic shoes to fill, and I am eager to dance alongside these heroes of my childhood as we pave a newly minted yellow brick road!"

Estranged mom pushes closer after first grandchild's birth

DEAR ABBY: My mother and I have never been close. We talk to or see each other five or six times a year at family functions. Honestly, I am fine with this.

I recently had a baby (her first grandchild), and suddenly she wants to come over all the time. I have tried to set boundaries (giving a day and time when she may come over), but it makes me look like a bully, and she tells people she doesn't feel welcome. My issue is she struggles with boundaries. She asks about my finances, inappropriate questions regarding my pregnancy, etc.—topics I don't feel comfortable discussing with her.

I honestly don't view this as my problem. We barely have a relationship and haven't for a long time, so I think she should take what I am offering. I simply do not care to see a lot of her. If she wants to see the baby, I feel I must be present because her having time alone with the baby is not an option that will work. Should I feel bad that she doesn't feel welcome?

IT'S COMPLICATED

DEAR IT'S COMPLICATED: I am sorry you weren't willing to share what caused your estrangement from your mother because it would have given me more to work with. Assuming there is a good reason for it (which I am), your mother is correct about what she's telling people. She ISN'T welcome. In fact, she's quite the opposite. If she doesn't know the reasons for it, you should make them clear to her. Because you are hearing her complaints repeated by others, feel free to explain to them the reasons. You are within your rights to set boundaries regarding your mother's visits, and you should not be made to feel guilty for doing it.

DEAR ABBY: I have known my friend "Isabella" since elementary school. When we were teenagers, we both developed medical problems. I tried to help her as much as I could, but it became clear that she was having trouble dealing with her condition. She was headed down a bad path and struggling emotionally, so we gradually grew apart.

I friended her on Facebook because I still wanted to remain friendly, but she never posted anything until recently. Now she has started posting about heavy drug use and how much it "helps" her.

I don't want to be associated with this. I'm building a career, and I don't want anyone assuming I use drugs, too. However, I want to remain friends with Isabella on Facebook, since it's our only method of communication, and I want to help her overcome this. What do you suggest?

DISCREET HELPER IN THE SOUTH

DEAR HELPER: I'm suggesting you unfriend Isabella immediately for the reason you mentioned: the fear of guilt by association. As much as you would like to help your old friend with her addiction problem, and while you might suggest she enter a treatment program, it won't happen until she finally realizes the drugs are not only NOT improving her life, but preventing her from accomplishing it. From what you have written, Isabella is still neck deep in denial, and you cannot fix that.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

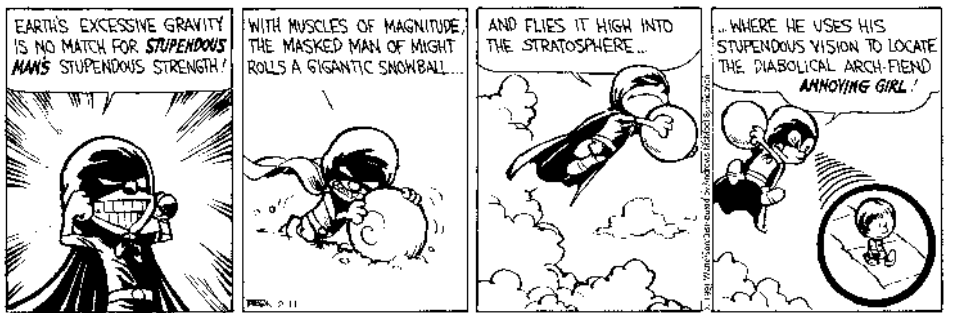
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


EARTH'S EXCESSIVE GRAVITY IS NO MATCH FOR STUPENDOUS MAN'S STUPENDOUS STRENGTH!
WITH MUSCLES OF MAGNITUDE, THE MASKED MAN OF MIGHT ROLLS A GIGANTIC SNOWBALL...
AND FLIES IT HIGH INTO THE STRATOSPHERE...
...WHERE HE USES HIS STUPENDOUS VISION TO LOCATE THE DIABOLICAL ARCH-FIEND ANNOYING GIRL!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

EXCUSE ME, PIERRE. IS IT?
YEP!
I'M TO BELIEVE YOU'RE OUR METER READER AND NOT A COFFEE SPY?
I'M JUST A METER READER. WITH J.G. ELECTRIC.
I KNOW YOU'RE MORE THAN THAT, MISTER.
WELL, I AM WORKING ON A SCREENPLAY IN MY OFF TIME.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

LOOK AT THIS... LASSIE RETWEETED MY PICTURE OF MY FAVORITE FIRE HYDRANT.
PRETTY COOL, HUH?
I THOUGHT LASSIE DIED.
NO, THIS LASSIE IS A 50-YEAR-OLD GUY LIVING IN HIS PARENTS' BASEMENT

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

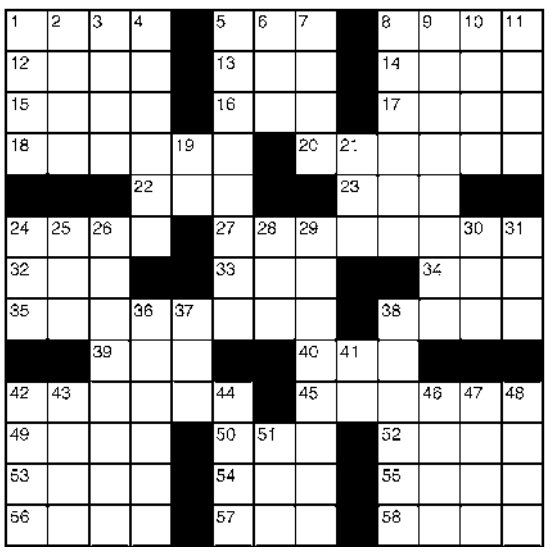
ACROSS
1 Out of control
5 Tool set
8 Related
12 Baby's call
13 German pronoun
14 Spanish ayes
15 Surgeon with a TV talk show
16 Actress Vardalos
17 Ginger cookie
18 Wrapped garment
20 Egg beaters
22 Gut-punch reaction
23 Bat wood
24 Scolding sounds
27 Laundry problem caused by a leaky pen
32 "Exodus" hero
33 Lanka lead-in
34 Tax form ID
35 Author Franzen
38 Up for it
39 — Pickles (one of the Rugrats)
40 Jay follower
42 Upstanding guy
45 Bestow
49 Baseball's Hershiser
50 Gorilla
52 Do in
53 Differently
54 Part of UCLA
55 "— and Away"
56 Actress Harper
57 In shape
58 Burrowing critter

DOWN
1 Tosses in
2 Kate of "House of Cards"
3 Bloodhound's clue
4 Simple instruments
5 Huey Long's nickname
6 Here (Fr.)
7 Spring meltdown
8 Help
9 Congolese capital
10 Author Dinesen
11 Pinches
19 Rejection
21 Possesses
24 Mahal preceder
25 Hit show letters
26 Benevolence
28 Gun lobby org.
29 Most twisted
30 Belief
31 Away from SSW
36 Supermarket sections
37 Patient's need, briefly
38 Drywall material
41 Exist
42 Champagne brand
43 — Stanley Gardner
44 50%
46 Dog food brand
47 "The Rookie" actor Julia
48 Ilk
51 Luau bowlful

Solution time: 24 mins.

A	R	C	S	■	L	F	O	■	S	F	R	F
L	O	O	T	■	O	R	B	■	T	S	A	R
E	S	P	R	E	S	S	O	■	A	P	S	E
S	H	E	A	R	■	■	E	D	I	T	E	D
■	■	■	D	A	R	T	■	O	D	E	■	■
A	G	E	S	■	C	R	E	O	■	S	R	A
D	E	S	■	P	S	A	L	M	■	T	E	N
S	T	P	■	R	E	P	S	■	I	S	L	A
■	■	O	H	O	■	P	A	W	N	■	■	■
U	N	S	A	F	E	■	■	O	C	A	L	A
S	A	■	L	■	E	S	P	O	L	S	E	S
E	T	T	E	■	L	E	A	■	R	E	G	S
S	O	O	N	■	Y	A	Y	■	S	C	O	T

Yesterday's answer 2-11



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Taylor Lautner, 29; Kelly Rowland, 40; Jennifer Aniston, 52; Sheryl Crow, 59.

Happy Birthday: Channel your energy wisely. There is so much you can accomplish if you stay focused on what you want to achieve. Tunnel vision, discipline and a good imagination will set the stage for a better tomorrow. Don't let negativity or a challenge ruin your plans. Set your goals high, and refuse to let anyone stand in your way. Your numbers are 5, 16, 23, 25, 32, 36, 41.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Embrace those who share your concerns, and find a collective way to make a difference. Be objective, and take on a leadership position. Changes that take place may not be as planned but will lead to a better future. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Take a step back if uncertainty prevails. You're better off having a well-thought-out plan in place before you make a move. Look at every angle, and you'll find a unique way to overcome a problem that stands in your way. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Forge ahead with intelligence and enthusiasm. You can master whatever you set out to do as long as you don't let anyone interfere. Know your capabilities, and you'll live up to your expectations. Personal gain and growth are apparent. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Let the past be your guide. Trust your instincts, and refuse to let someone charm you into something that isn't in your best interest. Do what feels comfortable, and rely on common sense to make the right decision. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Stay calm. Don't feel obligated to make a change because someone else does. Weigh the pros and cons, then consider what will be in your best interest. A partnership will need an adjustment before you proceed. Romance is on the rise. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Time is money, so step up and get things done on time. Your effort and ability to adjust to whatever comes down the pipeline will put you in a good position. A partnership will take an unusual turn, revealing what lies ahead. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Excitement and new beginnings are heading your way, but that doesn't mean you can be overindulgent. Pace yourself; don't overspend or overdo. Keep your costs down and your plans within reason. Romance and self-improvement are encouraged. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Take care of domestic problems quickly. If you let things linger, you will face double the trouble. Look for unique solutions, and take a proactive approach that will encourage implementing the changes required immediately. Avoid risky situations. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Offer food for thought. A stimulating conversation will give you an inside look into the way others think and feel. Positive suggestions will have a more significant impact than criticism. Plan something special with someone you love, and it will enhance your life. ✪✪✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Fix up your space, but don't spend more than you can afford to appease someone who isn't contributing as much as you. Equality is necessary if you don't want to jeopardize a relationship that's important to you. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Distance yourself from anyone trying to pick a fight or tell you what to do. Too much of anything will work against you. Pace yourself and be aware of what's going on around you. A practical plan will help maintain your budget. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Refuse to let anger take over when focusing on your responsibilities will get you closer to what you are trying to achieve. A unique idea will grab your interest and encourage you to incorporate something new and exciting into your daily routine. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are conscientious, insightful and charitable. You are impulsive and assertive.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

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EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	8				2		
		7		2			
9	2				5		8
	2		1		6		4	
	3		4		8		1	
6		1				7		2
			3		1			
		5				4		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/11

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

8	1	7	9	3	2	4	5	6
6	3	2	5	4	1	7	9	8
4	9	5	8	7	6	1	3	2
9	6	4	2	5	7	3	8	1
3	5	8	1	6	9	2	4	7
7	2	1	4	8	3	9	6	5
2	7	6	3	9	5	8	1	4
5	4	3	7	1	8	6	2	9
1	8	9	6	2	4	5	7	3

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

OLIVER & BONACINI RESTAURANTS — Solution: 7 letters

P	R	T	U	O	E	K	A	T	F	L	E	N	I	D
Y	A	E	H	C	N	E	R	F	A	O	E	K	A	B
E	R	R	S	A	B	E	I	N	N	B	O	L	S	S
X	E	A	I	E	S	B	A	A	E	I	A	D	H	T
P	L	S	G	S	R	S	C	U	L	S	R	T	I	N
A	A	D	E	L	I	V	E	R	Y	T	O	M	F	E
N	C	D	N	T	A	A	A	W	E	R	B	I	T	V
S	S	S	R	A	B	C	N	T	O	O	B	C	S	E
I	P	A	M	A	I	S	O	N	I	R	G	H	T	E
O	U	U	B	E	E	L	T	A	A	O	Ⓟ	Ⓐ	Ⓡ	Ⓦ
N	K	E	O	E	R	O	A	V	D	M	N	E	O	O
F	L	C	F	R	N	E	E	T	N	A	C	L	F	I
E	S	F	A	T	G	N	M	U	I	I	N	F	M	T
H	O	B	A	N	N	O	C	K	L	N	U	A	O	A
C	S	I	D	E	S	E	G	R	E	B	U	A	C	P

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Artisanal, Asian, Auberge, Babel, Bake, Bannock, Bars, Biff, Bistro, Blue, Braven, Brew, Buffo, Calgary, Canada, Canoe, Canteen, Chef, Coffee, Comfort, Delivery, Dessert, Dine, Entrée, Events, Expansion, Foodie, French, Groups, Italian, Leña, Main, Maison, Meat, Michael, Parisian, Patio, Reservation, Salad, Shifts, Sides, Snack, Takeout, Toronto, Upscale, Wrap

Yesterday's Answer: Cosmetic

The NEW Treasury 41 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-842-6480.

Curry, Warriors end Spurs' win streak

AP
Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (30) dives past San Antonio Spurs forward Trey Lyles (41) for a loose ball during the first half of an NBA game in San Antonio, Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021.

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Even after three NBA championships and two MVP awards, Stephen Curry has never looked better to his coach.

Curry scored 32 points and the Golden State Warriors dominated San Antonio 114-91 on Tuesday night, snapping the Spurs' three-game winning streak.

"This is the best I've ever seen him, just from a confidence and strength standpoint, and that's saying something, obviously," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "Two-time MVP. I don't think I've ever seen him look better."

After missing all but five games last season due to a broken metacarpal in his left hand, Curry is averaging 29.5 points this season.

"I worked my butt off over the offseason," Curry said. "I'm just happy to be playing. I feel strong. I feel in rhythm, in ultimate control of my game. Shots are falling. It all comes not only with my own confidence, but growing confidence in my team."

Curry was 4 for 10 on 3-pointers and 11 for 20 overall. His night included switching hands after contact for an improbable, behind-the-back flip shot late in the first quarter that he made despite being fouled.

"Man, I have to go back in the fault for that," Warriors veteran Draymond Green said. "That was nice. It was very close to an (Michael Jordan) little flip. That was a good one for sure. That was up there."

Curry laughed when told of the comparison.

"Nothing high flying or above the rim about that," Curry said. "I'll take that recognition. I did switch hands, so that is the only comparison."

Golden State ended a five-game losing streak in San Antonio. Eric Paschall had 15 points and Andrew Wiggins added 14 for the Warriors.

Rudy Gay scored 17 points, Trey Lyles had 15 and Keldon Johnson and Patty Mills had 13 apiece for San Antonio.

It was the Spurs' final home game before embarking on their annual nearly month-long road trip while the city's Stock Show & Rodeo is held at the AT&T Center.

Pistons 122, Nets 111

In Detroit, Jerami Grant equaled a career high with 32 points and the Pistons took advantage of Kevin Durant's absence, beating the Brooklyn Nets.

Detroit snapped a four-game losing streak and showed the same type of spirit that was on display in its previous game, a double-overtime loss in Los Angeles against the defending champion Lakers. The last-place Pistons handed Brooklyn its third straight defeat.

Durant was out because of the NBA's health and safety protocols. The Nets were without both him and Kyrie Irving (right finger sprain) in a loss to Philadelphia on Saturday night. Irving returned against Detroit and scored 27 points.

James Harden added 24 for Brooklyn, but it wasn't enough for the Nets to overcome a poor start.

Jazz 122, Celtics 108

In Salt Lake City, Donovan Mitchell had 36 points and nine assists to lead the Utah Jazz to their fifth straight victory.

Joe Ingles scored a season-high 24 points and added six assists for the Jazz. Rudy Gobert chipped in 18 points and 12 rebounds. Bojan Bogdanovic added 16 points and eight rebounds.

Utah (20-5) has won 16 of its last 17 games.

Jaylen Brown scored 33 points and Jayson Tatum added 23 for Boston. The Celtics (12-11) lost for the third time in four games.

76ers 119, Kings 111

In Sacramento, Joel Embiid had 25 points, 17 rebounds and helped Philadelphia turn up the defensive intensity in the fourth quarter to beat the Kings.

Tobias Harris and Seth Curry each added 22 points as the Sixers used a 10-0 run to take control of the game in the fourth and win for the sixth time in seven games.

The Kings took a 99-97 lead on a layup by Harrison Barnes with 7:26 to go and then didn't score again for nearly three minutes, missing seven straight shots and committing a turnover.

Shake Milton tied the game with a layup and then Harris and Milton hit 3-pointers to put Philadelphia up six points. Embiid's two free throws made it 107-99 and the Sixers held on.

Heat 98, Knicks 96

In Miami, Jimmy Butler and Bam Adebayo did all of the Heat's scoring for much of the second half, Butler finishing with a game-high 26 points, and the Heat beat New York to finish off a sweep of a home-and-home series.

RJ Barrett had a chance to tie it on the game's final play, but his layup bounced off the rim and Miami won three straight for the first time this season. Kelly Olynyk scored 20 points for Miami, Adebayo had 19 and Tyler Herro finished with 15—including the 3-pointer with 1:04 left that put the Heat up for good.

Elfrid Payton led the Knicks with 18 points, and Derrick Rose—in his first game back with New York—had 14 off the bench.

Pelicans 130, Rockets 101

In New Orleans, reserve Josh Hart had 20 points and a career-high 17 rebounds to help the Pelicans overcome Zion Williamson's early foul trouble and beat Houston.

Brandon Ingram scored 22 and Williamson added 20 points, seven assists, five rebounds and a steal despite being limited to 20 minutes on the court, which might prove beneficial with New Orleans playing on back-to-back nights.

Willy Hernangomez added 14 points and 10 rebounds in a reserve role and Lonzo Ball capped his 15-point night with a back-breaking 3 in the fourth quarter as New Orleans pulled away for good.

Trail Blazers 106, Magic 97

In Portland, Damian Lillard scored 36 points and the Trail Blazers extended their winning streak over Orlando to eight games.

Carmelo Anthony added a season-high 23 points, including five 3-pointers. It was Lillard's 13th game with 30-plus points this season.

Nikola Vucevic had 27 points and 15 rebounds for the short-handed Magic, who have lost six of their last seven games. Rookie Cole Anthony started but did not return for the second half because of a shoulder injury.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic	W	L	PCT	GB
Philadelphia	18	7	.720	0.0
Brooklyn	14	12	.538	4.5
Boston	12	11	.522	5.0
Toronto	11	13	.458	6.5
New York	11	15	.423	7.5
Central				
Milwaukee	16	8	.667	0.0
Indiana	12	12	.500	4.0
Cleveland	10	15	.400	6.5
Chicago	9	14	.391	6.5
Detroit	6	18	.250	10.0
Southeast				
Charlotte	12	13	.480	0.0
Atlanta	11	12	.478	0.0
Miami	10	14	.417	1.5
Orlando	9	16	.360	3.0
Washington	6	15	.286	4.0

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Pacific	W	L	PCT	GB
LA Lakers	19	6	.760	0.0
LA Clippers	17	8	.680	2.0
Phoenix	14	9	.609	4.0
Golden State	13	12	.520	6.0
Sacramento	12	12	.500	6.5
Southwest				
San Antonio	14	11	.560	0.0
New Orleans	11	12	.478	2.0
Memphis	9	10	.474	2.0
Houston	11	13	.458	2.5
Dallas	11	14	.440	3.0
Northwest				
Utah	20	5	.800	0.0
Portland	13	10	.565	6.0
Denver	12	11	.522	7.0
Oklahoma City	10	13	.435	9.0
Minnesota	6	18	.250	13.5

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A look at what quarantine is like in Olympic host Japan

TOKYO (AP)—What's it like traveling to Japan, six months ahead of the Olympics?

Almost impossible, unless you're a Japanese national or a foreigner with resident status.

A state of emergency for a large part of the country means that even those special cases who are allowed in have to take multiple coronavirus tests and stay holed up in quarantine.

And what could the entry process be like for thousands of Olympic athletes scheduled to show up ahead of the July games?

Plans now call for the athletes to be tested 72 hours before they leave home; then again when they arrive, and then frequently when they are closed off in a "bubble" in the Athletes' Village alongside Tokyo Bay.

Before getting off, passengers need to fill in a "Kenko Card" (Health Card) that declares what countries they've been in during the past 14 days and where they will be self-isolating for the next 14 days in Japan.

Because of the emergence in Japan of new coronavirus variants, all people traveling from Level 3 countries and regions—the U.K., South Africa, Ireland and parts of Brazil — have to quarantine at a location designated by the government, usually a hotel near the airport, for at least the first three days.

Those who test negative for the virus on their third day can then leave, but they have to remain in self-isolation elsewhere for 11 more days to complete the quarantine.

You get food delivered to your door three times a day. Some hotels have laundry service and delivery can be arranged as well. Alcohol consumption is prohibited.

Every morning you must report your temperature via a smartphone. You can only open your door to collect your lunch boxes and test kits.

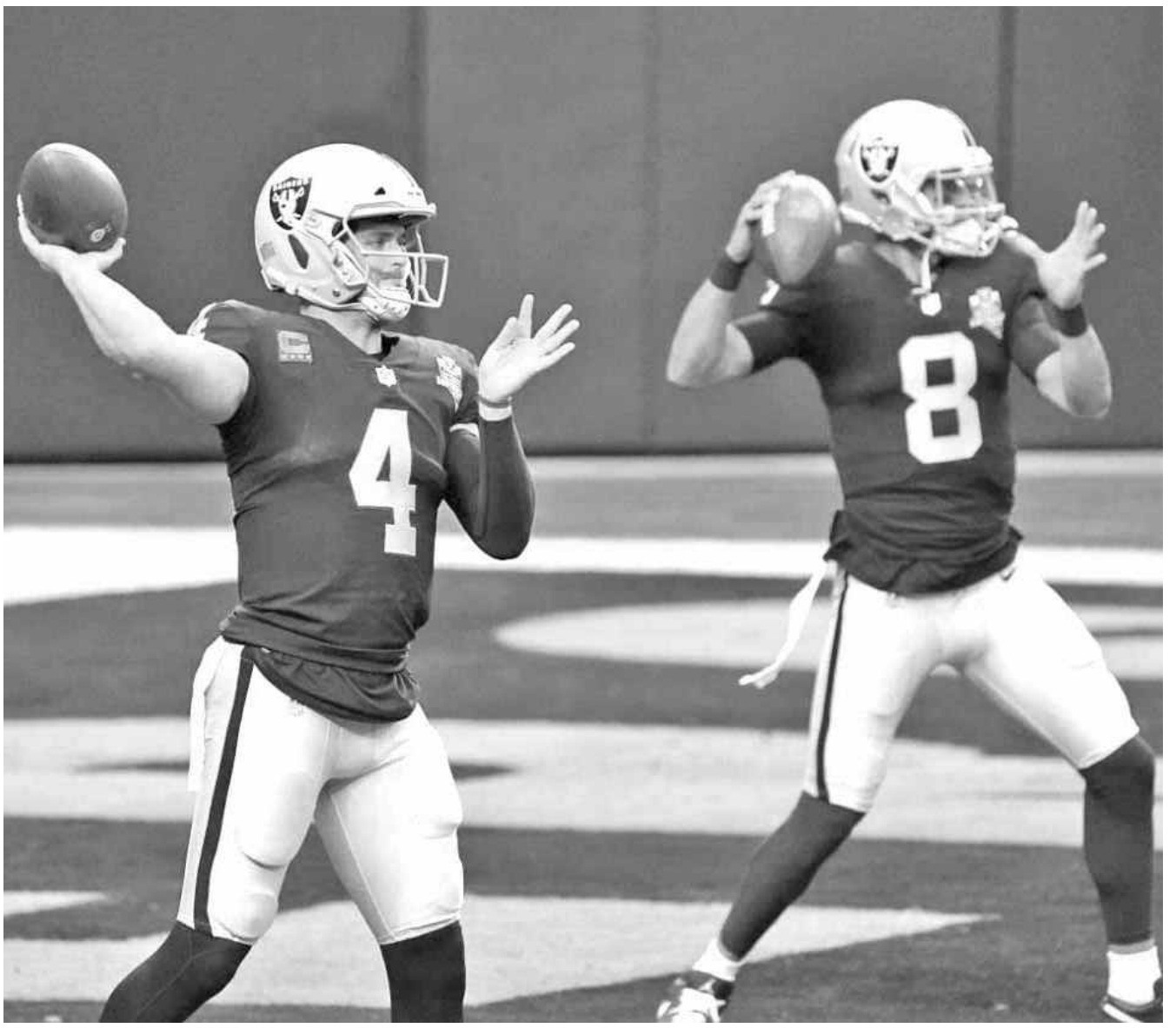
On the third day of your stay, you take a coronavirus test that's similar to the airport test. If you test negative, you can head to your next designated location —some go home, others to a private hotel—to complete your self-isolation. Again, you can't use any forms of public transportation.

A staff worker will check if you have installed a COVID-19 Contact-Confirming Application designated by the government on an online messenger application to report your health condition. You must allow your location to be accessible on your smartphone.

Those without a smartphone will have a daily call for the rest of the self-isolation period instead.

In case of a violation, your name and nationality will be announced publicly, and, if you're a foreign resident, you may lose your residence status and be deported.

Raiders' Mariota drawing trade interest



AP

Las Vegas Raiders quarterbacks Derek Carr (4) and Marcus Mariota (8) warm up before their game against the Denver Broncos at Empower Field at Mile High on January 3, 2021 in Denver, Colorado.

LAS VEGAS — The Raiders' phones have been ringing lately as NFL teams inquire about both of their starting quarterbacks. That's the word from NFL Media's Ian Rapoport, who shared the latest on Las Vegas' quarterback situation Tuesday.

"They've had several teams call, plenty of teams call on their quarterback," Rapoport said. "But not just Derek Carr. Teams are interested in Derek Carr, but I know it would be incredibly expensive if the Raiders dealt him. It doesn't sound like they've hung up the phone but I don't get the sense they want to deal him either.

"Marcus Mariota is getting trade interest as well. It is possible that one Raiders quarterback is traded and it's not Derek Carr. Because there's legitimate and real interest in Mariota."

Mariota only played in one game last season, entering when Derek Carr exited with a groin injury in a Week 15 overtime loss to the Los Angeles Chargers. It appears Mariota made a good impression during his audition. Mariota threw for 226 yards and a touchdown while rushing for 88 yards and another score.

"That performance that he gave at the end of the year really caught a lot of teams' eyes," Rapoport said.

The 27-year-old is owed $11.35 million next season and could fit the profile for a Ryan Tannehill-like renaissance if he finds the right situation, according to Rapoport. Ironically, Tannehill re-ignited his career after he went from Miami Dolphins franchise quarterback to Mariota's backup, before taking over as the Tennessee Titans' starter in 2019.

The reported haul for Matthew Stafford was so large that prying Derek Carr away from the Raiders would likely be prohibitive for most teams. The 30-year-old is durable, only having missed two games his entire seven-year career, and has eclipsed 4,000 yards in each of the last three seasons.

The mobile, humble signal-caller should still have plenty of juice left in his arm and legs. The Raiders can also probably find a cheaper backup option while getting something in return for a trade, so don't be surprised if Mariota gets a shot as another team's QB1 next fall.

Bears in Wentz trade talks

Another day, another Carson Wentz rumor and another mention of the Bears.

Trade rumors and reports surrounding Wentz keep picking up steam, and they keep connecting the Eagles and Bears.

"My understanding is they are receiving significant interest from teams about potential acquiring the former starter in Philly," Rapoport said. "Two big time teams to keep an eye on, the Chicago Bears and Indianapolis Colts. Both of them have been in contact with the Eagles."

Rapoport says the Eagles have talked about keeping Wentz, but noted the longer trade rumors and discussion linger the more likely a trade comes to fruition.

There were also reports that the Bears and Eagles were close to a trade for Wentz on Saturday night.

Bears fans are a bit traumatized when it comes to quarterback saviors. They've seen their general manager Ryan Pace give a ton of money to Mike Glennon, draft Mitch Trubisky over Patrick Mahomes and Deshaun Watson and recently, trading for Nick Foles.

So with the names out there on the quarterback market, like Watson requesting a trade or the Panthers offering up Teddy Bridgewater to Detroit for Matthew Stafford, Wentz is an uninspiring option in the eyes of fans.

He had a rough 2020 season and no Bears fan is viewing him as the missing piece. If he can regain his form from the season that ended in a Super Bowl win, by Nick Foles, then things could be different but it's a gamble and that's what has fans upset. They want certainty.

No Packers offer yet for Williams

With contracts expiring for several important players and little financial spending power under a shrinking salary cap in 2021, the Green Bay Packers may have to let a number of players test free agency without an opening contract offer next month.

Running back Jamaal Williams looks like one player with an uncertain future in Green Bay.

According to Rob Demovsky of ESPN, the Packers did not extend a new contract offer to Williams over the course of the 2020 season.

A fourth-round pick in 2017, Williams has an expiring rookie contract and will be an unrestricted free agent come the new league year.

Demovsky reports the Packers have sent several contract offers to running back Aaron Jones, who appears to be the team's free-agent priority at the position. The two sides haven't struck a deal and it's looking increasingly likely that Jones, a first-time Pro Bowler in 2020, will reach the open market without a new deal from the Packers.

Williams could be an attractive backup plan if Jones departs.

Over four NFL seasons, Williams has produced nearly 3,000 total yards and scored 18 touchdowns. He is averaging 4.0 yards per carry and has at least 25 catches in all four seasons.

Although far from a game-changer, Williams did have over 100 total yards in two of his starts in place of Jones this season, and he's both reliable as a runner, receiver and blocker and beloved by teammates and coaches.

The Packers just might not have the money to bring him back. Well over the projected 2021 salary cap at this point, the Packers will need to clear space over the next month before even entertaining adding more to next year's cap. ***(AP/NBC)***

MLB players to wear electronic tracers, face discipline

NEW YORK (AP)—Major League Baseball players, on-field staff and non-playing personnel who require access to them at ballparks must wear electronic tracing wristbands from the start of spring training and face discipline for violations.

Players will be encouraged to get vaccines but are not required to get them.

That was part of upgraded health protocols agreed to by Major League Baseball and the players' association to deal with the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The 108-page operations manual, agreed to Monday night and obtained by The Associated Press, expands on the 101-page version used during the shortened 2020 season.

"Every covered Individual must wear a Kinexon contact tracing device at all times while in club facilities and during club directed travel and while engaged in team activities, including group workouts and practices," the manual says. "Repeated failure to wear the devices or repeated failure to return the devices to the Kinexon device docking station may be a basis for discipline," the manual says.

The manual states violations of the MLB or club codes of conduct or of spring training home quarantine "are subject to potential discipline, including but not limited to suspension or forfeiture of salary for days spent away from the club while in mandatory self-isolation or quarantine resulting from the violation."

Player discipline would be subject to the just cause provisions of the collective bargaining agreement.

"Vaccination for COVID-19 will be voluntary for all players. However, MLB and the MLBPA will strongly encourage players to undergo vaccination at the appropriate time," the manual states.

It adds "the parties, in consultation with their respective medical experts, will consider in good faith relaxing these protocols on a league-wide, team-wide and/or individual basis" ... (to) the extent it is safe and appropriate to do so" when sufficient players are immunized.

Deadening ball amid HR surge

Meanwhile, MLB has slightly deadened its baseballs amid a years-long surge in home runs.

MLB anticipates the changes will be subtle, and a memo to teams last week cited an independent lab that found the new balls will fly 1 to 2 feet shorter when hit over 375 feet. Five teams also plan to add humidors to their stadiums, raising the total to 10 of 30 MLB stadiums equipped with humidity-controlled storage spaces.

A person familiar with the note spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Monday because the memo, sent by MLB executive vice president of baseball operations Morgan Sword, was sent privately. The Athletic first reported the contents of the memo.

The makeup of official Rawlings baseballs used in MLB games has come under scrutiny in recent years. A record 6,776 homers were hit during the 2019 regular season, and the rate of home runs fell only slightly during the pandemic-shortened 2020 season—from 6.6% of plate appearances resulting in homers in 2019 to 6.5% last year.

A four-person committee of scientists commissioned by MLB concluded after the 2019 season that baseballs had less drag on average than in previous seasons, contributing to the power surge. Their report blamed the spike in part on inconsistencies in seam height.

MLB's balls are hand-sewn by workers at Rawlings' factory in Costa Rica, leading to inevitable, minor deviations in production that can have sizeable repercussions.

Djokovic holds off Tiafoe, reaches 3rd round

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Frances Tiafoe had never played a No. 1, had never beaten anyone in the Top 5, and now he'd just won a tiebreaker against Novak Djokovic to level their second-round match at the Australian Open.

Full of animation in his courtside chair, Tiafoe took the court and said what was obvious to everyone watching: "I love this."

Tiafoe, a 23-year-old American who reached the quarterfinals here two years ago, threw everything he could at eight-time Australian Open champion Djokovic. He pulled the crowd into the contest, too. But it wasn't quite enough, with the defending champion winning 6-3, 6-7 (3), 7-6 (2), 6-3 in a 3 1/2-hour afternoon match on Rod Laver Arena.

The fourth set was on serve and appeared headed for another tiebreaker when Tiafoe was given a time violation on his serve. He lost his temper, and ultimately the game. He didn't win another game in the match, which finished with a double-fault.

Tiafoe shook his head, then jogged to the net to embrace Djokovic. He'll take plenty from this.

Djokovic bowed, touched the court with his hand, and then went into his more customary celebrations.

"Very tough match. Difficult conditions. While we had sun on the court, it was very, very warm. A lot of long rallies," Djokovic said Wednesday. "I want to give a hand to Frances for a very tough fight. It was a fantastic match on his part."

Djokovic served 26 aces, Tiafoe 23. Djokovic had the edge in terms of winners (56-49) and converted five of his breakpoint chances, while Tiafoe converted two of his three.

After taking a quick look at the stats, Djokovic said he couldn't remember serving more aces, or seeing more serves pass him.

"It's not the first time that I'm in this kind of situation, I know how to handle these kinds of circumstances," Djokovic said in his on-court TV interview. "He gave it his all."

Dominic Thiem, who lost the final here last year to Djokovic but went one better to win the U.S. Open, eased through the second round with a 6-4, 6-0, 6-2 win over Dominik Koepfer.

Three-time major winner Stan Wawrinka, the 2014 Australian Open champion, wasted a big lead in the fifth-set tiebreak—and three match points—before losing 7-5, 6-1, 4-6, 2-6, 7-6 (9) to Marton Fucsovics. Five unforced errors in the last seven points of the tiebreaker cost him the match.

Serena Williams kept her bid for a 24th Grand Slam singles title on track, making only 11 unforced errors as she swept Nina Stojanovic 6-3, 6-0.

But a 21st trip to Melbourne Park ended painfully for her older sister, Venus Williams.

The seven-time major winner was trailing 1-5 in the opening set against Sara Errani when she landed awkwardly on her ankle as she approached the net for a volley. She fought back tears before receiving treatment on the ankle, and gamely continued, hobbling between points, before losing 6-1, 6-0.

The 40-year-old Williams was making her 88th Grand Slam main draw appearance, the most among women in the Open era.

Former U.S. Open champion Bianca Andreescu, coming back from 15 months out with injury, became the latest top-10 player to be beaten by veteran Hsieh Su-wei of Taiwan.

The eighth-seeded Andreescu's power was no match for Hsieh's shotmaking in a second-round upset, 6-3, 6-2.

Andreescu, a 20-year-old Canadian, seemed befuddled by the 35-year-old Hsieh's unorthodox game, which includes a two-handed forehand and an unpredictable mix of pace and placement.

AP

Serbia's Novak Djokovic makes a backhand return to United States' Frances Tiafoe during their second round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021.

Australian Open's hard quarantine 'took a toll' on players

MELBOURNE (AP)—Being stuck for two weeks in a Melbourne hotel room with windows that wouldn't open "really took a toll" on Victoria Azarenka in the leadup to the Australian Open, the Grand Slam tournament's two-time champion explained after she had trouble breathing during a first-round loss.

When Tennys Sandgren resumed practicing after his can't-go-anywhere hard quarantine ended, the American said Tuesday, his hands developed blisters from holding a racket. The rest of his body was so sore, Sangren said, he "took two days off because I couldn't walk."

Vasek Pospisil's time in lockdown left him "a little bit resentful" about being "unprepared" and concerned about the lack of a level playing field, the Canadian said in a video interview with The Associated Press. The 2014 Wimbledon doubles champion was critical of Tennis Australia, saying: "They're not familiar with player needs and how it is to be a professional athlete."

Like Azarenka, both Sandgren and Pospisil were among the more than 70 players forced to stay in their hotel rooms for every minute of at least 14 days after arriving, at the behest of a government in a country that undertook serious measures to stem coronavirus cases (Australia has reported fewer than 1,000 deaths).

And, like Azarenka, both Sandgren and Pospisil lost their opening matches.

"I've never walked on to a court in a Grand Slam knowing that I'm probably not going to be able to win. I'm physically not in shape enough to play with my opponent," said Sandgren, who was beaten 7-5, 6-1, 6-1 by No. 21 seed Alex De Minaur on Day 2 a year after holding match points against Roger Federer in the quarterfinals. "I wouldn't say the whole tournament is a joke, but for some players, it's not feasible. It's just not feasible."

For some, it's worked out OK so far: 20-year-old American Ann Li, for example, has won five matches in a row since emerging from her hard quarantine, including a 6-2, 6-0 victory over No. 31 seed Zhang Shuai on Tuesday. Heather Watson also reached the second round, despite acknowledging she "didn't feel as fit as usual, which is no surprise."

Paula Badosa, a 23-year-old Spaniard, said she dealt with physical issues and anxiety during her isolation, which lasted 21 days because she tested positive for COVID-19 after getting to Australia.

Azarenka and others were deemed at risk for exposure to the illness after another passenger on their chartered flight tested positive.

"It was tough for me to recover," said the 70th-ranked Badosa, who was eliminated 6-7 (4), 7-6 (4), 7-5 by Russian qualifier Liudmila Samsonova.

Badosa served for the win, but she faded as the match stretched past 2½ hours, dropping the last four games.

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Kang and Irin Chung getting the No. 1 seed in the 64-squad draw and adult player Dong Min Lee and junior player Hoo Wang taking the No. 2 seed.

Seeded players are given a bye in the first round. Eleven other teams are seeded in the mixed-up doubles event. The list includes (No. 3 to 12 seeded teams) Simon Tang and Sam Ryu, Rafael Jones and Savita Sikkel, Cody Shimizu and Edwin Simbulan, Min Seong Kim and Sean Lee, Wataru Kadokura and Bishop Ryan Jimenez, June Yu and Gerald Boyer, Sam Culp and Gary Ramsey, Nason Wessel and Ami Tsukagoshi, Lina Tsukagoshi and Hye Jin Elliot, and Si Woo Lee and Andy Kim.

This year's White Coconut Classic that will be played from Feb. 13 to 15 and Feb. 20 and 21, will also have competition in the men's singles, women's singles, men's over 40 singles, co-ed U10 singles, boys and girls U12 and U14 singles, boys U16 singles, and mini-tennis.

The men's singles division has the most entries among the singles events with 13 players on the 16-player draw. Junior players Jimin Woo and Sean Lee are the Top 2 seeds in the division, while former junior player Colin Ramsey is seeded third and Sam Ryu—another junior player—is seeded fourth. Completing the men's singles division field are Andy Kim, Mat Murphy, Quintin Ramsey, Jun Wang, Gerald Bouter, Isaac Heo, David Kwon, Vincent Tudela, and Jones.

Meanwhile, players in the other draws will be reported in *Saipan Tribune*'s Friday issue.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

In this 2018 file photo, Vincent Tudela, left, hits a low shot, while teammate Nason Wessel looks on during their game in the mixed-up doubles of the White Coconut Classic at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

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the NMIFA "C" Coaching Certificate Course that started early this week.

Angeles admitted that having the JNA class this season amid the COVID-19 pandemic is definitely challenging, but NMIFA and its pool of coaches are committed and determined to run the program to keep the players on track toward becoming strong candidates for the CNMI national team

"It is very important for NMIFA to continue with this kind of program even if there's no definite tournaments yet. JNA prepares these young players technically, physically, and mentally before they step into the NMI National Team program and training has to be year-round," Angeles said.

This year's class had its first training session last Thursday and the NMIFA coaches were pleased with the players' performance early into the season. However, Angeles said they have a lot of work ahead, especially at this time when they have to follow safety measures against the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We will still focus on the basic techniques in the movement, coordination, moving the ball intentionally as a team, gaining the ball intentionally as a team and understanding player's positional task in a 5v5 and 8v8 game," the JNA head coach said.

Angeles added they hope to develop a few more goalkeepers from the group now that JNA has Zapanta as goalkeeper mentor.

"Coach Raymond will introduce the fundamentals of goalkeeping. As of now we have two goalkeepers, one from each team and we're hoping to get more players to try goalkeeping," Angeles said.

Curry, Warriors end Spurs' win streak

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Raiders' Mariota drawing trade interest

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34 join elite training program

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members of the Junior National Academy's Spring Class of 2021 pose for a photo with their coaches before starting their training session early this month at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

For the first time since its inception a couple of years ago, Northern Mariana Islands Football Association's Junior National Academy will have a separate pool for boys and girls, bringing the total of players who made the grade for the elite training program this season to 34.

The JNA Spring Class of 2021 has 14 players in the girls pool and 20 in the boys and they were selected after going through a series of tryouts that started late last year. JNA is one of NMIFA's grassroots programs for players in the 10 to 12 age group and those who qualified for the special group are prepared for higher-level competitions and national team training system.

Making it to the spring class are Mary Amog, Matty Angeles, Marlaina Benjamin, Wynona Blas, Julie Ann Chavez, Kaye Anne Costales, Valerie Estella, Azriel Fatialofa, Phoenix Gross, Ella Hall, Alana Hayes, Ron Ebana Quindoza, Fiona Regan, and Caurie Staffler in the girls division. The boys side has Mark Costales, Akeen Edvalson, Michael Elayda, Kohjiro Goto, Sernantie Jimenez, Yutaka Kadokura, Paul Lizama, Francisco Maratita, Anton Megino, Taiga Namia-Scoggins, Nolan Ngewakl, Jack Henry Raho, Tyrone Rio-Manipon, Moshe Sikkel, Landon Springer, Arstin and Jayson Tagabuel, Riku Takahashi, and Henry and Stephen Yeom.

"There are six new players on the girls team and five on the boys. The skill level is better as we have coached most of the players last season and can move up to the next level with ease this season," JNA head coach Jersh Angeles said.

Angeles will call the shots for the boys squad and will be assisted by CNMI Men's National player Joshua Abragan and goalkeeper coach Raymond Zapanta, while Angie Ito and women's national team member Katrina Costales will handle the girls crew. Angeles, Ito, and Zapanta are certified coaches, while Costales and Abragan are currently taking

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Coach Angie Ito, left, watches a player on the Junior National Academy's Spring Class of 2021 perform drills during a training session.

Tennis tournament returns

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

In this 2020 file photo, Lydia Tan competes in the women's singles event in the White Coconut Tennis Classic at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association will have its first tournament of the season this weekend with the staging of the White Coconut Tennis Classic at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

The White Coconut Classic will also be the first tennis competition that will take place on island since the COVID-19 pandemic struck in March 2020.

The NMITA will have 11 events for this year's White Coconut Classic, including the main feature of the tournament—the mixed-up doubles. The unique event usually has adult and youth players teaming up, while other pairings have players with different skill level.

This season's mixed-up doubles event has 36 teams with junior players Daniel

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